Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/southerners0000cyru

The Southerners

"I give you the South, gentlemen!"

The Southerners

A Story of the Civil War

BY

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1917

COPYRIGHT, 1902, BY
CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

COPYRIGHT, 1903, BY
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

All rights reserved

To

THE MEN WHO FOUGHT

AND THE WOMEN WHO COULD ONLY WAIT

PREFACE

THERE is in my mind a picture of the days of Sixty-one–Sixty-five. I close my eyes, and out of the mists of the past there rises before me an old white house on a hill. It is springtime. A child is playing in the grass under the trees. A woman watches at the gate. And a soldier comes home from the wars. A soldier, sick, worn, weary; a haggard, broken wreck of the brave young man who left all at his country's first appeal and looked not back so long as he had strength to stand. His fighting days are over. And the woman meets him at the gate——

They come down the long walk under the trees toward the little lad, the woman proudly supporting the man's faltering steps. The child, who has grown to step and speech while the man has been absent, shrinks away from the tired figure in the dusty faded Army blue, who stretches out trembling hands to him with words of affectionate appeal. The little boy does not recognize the stranger until he is caught up against that brave heart and hears the words, "My son, my son!"

I close my eyes and see once more my Father, as I saw him on that day nearly forty years ago.

And I open them again and my glance falls upon a daughter of the Carolinas, my wife. Her children and mine, typical of an United People, cluster about us. They look at me, some out of the blue eyes of the North, others from the brown ones of the South, and beg for a story—a world-wide, world-old appeal!

Can I speak to them of that great war when State faced State and Section met Section in our beloved land? Can I show them another flag than that they love that now flutters wellnigh round the world? Can I tell the splendid story of men of valor and consecration who differed so radically that only in the shock of battle could they compose their differences? Can I tell these things, on the one hand, without being false to the principles for which my father fought, which are my own; and, on the other, without giving offence or bitterness to those I love, who were on the other side? Can I be entirely fair? Can I, can anyone, to-day write of the Blue and the Gray so that they shall both approve?

Long ago I said to myself that some day I would try, and now, gentle reader, it is for you to say if I have succeeded, or if I have failed.

A word or two more. This book has been years in preparation. The subject has appealed to me as none other in our history. I have watched the evening camp-fires under the trees at Chickamauga, while I wore the Army uniform, and have fancied I was an actor in that tremendous cataclysmic battle, than which

this continent has seen none more desperate and bloody. I have stood in the rain on the ramparts of Fort Morgan, and involuntarily looked toward the staff for a glimpse of the Stars and Bars, flag of a cause that was lost. I have sailed in the sunshine through the channel where the *Tecumseh* sank, where the *Tennessee* fought the fleet, where the *Hartford*, carrying Farragut's flag, dashed ahead and ran down the torpedo line —once I wore the Navy blue—and I could almost hear the thunder of the guns.

Ought I to apologize in this place for appropriating to Peyton the glory of another when I put him in the *Metacomet's* cutter between the fort and the ships? Well, this was as brave an act as was ever done by any United States naval officer, yet the name of the man who did it, Acting-Ensign Henry C. Nields, is quite forgotten to-day. He deserves to be remembered with Decatur and Cushing and Hobson, and I am glad to be able to call attention to him here. He had the approval and admiration of our greatest Admiral, one of the world's sea-kings, who saw him do it all, and perhaps that is reward enough.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY.

BROOKLYN, February, 1903.

CONTENTS

BOOK I

THE STORM BREWS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Dreamer	3
II.	A Hard Situation for a Modest Man	14
III.	The Education of Tempe	22
IV.	Mary Annan will not be Made Love To	31
V.	Mary Annan Changes Her Mind	42
VI.	What Happened on the Shell Road	54
VII.	The Woman Between	61
VIII.	Peyton Salutes the Flag	71
IX.	Rivals Yet Friends	77
X.	Peyton Begs for Time to Think it Over	84
XI.	Problems to be Faced	92

BOOK II

THE STORM BREAKS

XII.	The Indecision of Peyton	99
XIII.	A Dinner and a Discussion	111
XIV.	The Gage is Thrown	126
XV.	The Kiss that Betrayed	134
XVI.	The Sifting of Peyton	141

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVII.	"To Thine Own Self be True"	146
XVIII.	Peyton Sticks to the Flag	151
XIX.	Driven Away	161
XX.	A Wanderer and a Vagabond	169
XXI.	The Regiment Marches Away	178

BOOK III

THE STORM RAGES

XXII.	Facing the Odds	189
XXIII.	Mary Annan Learns the Truth	196
XXIV.	With Darrow's Brigade	205
XXV.	The Night Before the Battle	212
XXVI.	Smashing Through the Union Line	216
XXVII.	"The Rock of Chickamauga"	222
XXVIII.	"Toward the Sound of the Cannon"	228
XXIX.	The Last Charge	231
XXX.	The Relief that Shamed	238
XXXI.	The Return of the Regiment	246

BOOK IV

THE THUNDERBOLT STROKE

XXXII.	A Great Captain of the Sea	255
XXXIII.	Peyton Points Out the Way	262
XXXIV.	A Promotion Declined	272
XXXV.	In the Wardroom of the Hartford	277

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXXVI.	BETTER IN THE MORNING	291
XXXVII.	THE FLEET GETS UNDER WAY	303
XXXVIII.	"AFTER YOU, PILOT!"	311
XXXIX.	"DAMN THE TORPEDOES! GO AHEAD!"	319
XL.	IN THE CASEMATE OF FORT MORGAN	326
XLI.	ON THE END OF THE WIRE	332
XLII.	IN THE METACOMET'S CUTTER	341
XLIII.	THE LAST DASH OF THE TENNESSEE	349

BOOK V

"THE STRIFE IS O'ER"

XLIV.	WITH ALL THE HONORS OF WAR	369
XLV.	HOW BOYD PEYTON CAME HOME AGAIN	380
XLVI.	SAD HOURS AT ANNANDALE	384
XLVII.	BOYD PEYTON SEES A VISION	390
XLVIII.	MARY ANNAN BEGS FORGIVENESS	394
XLIX.	THE MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD	400
L.	"WHITHER THOU GOEST I WILL GO"	406

ILLUSTRATIONS

"I give you the South, gentlemen" . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"Why, Boyd Peyton," she exclaimed, " . . . what a surprise!" 28

"Save the flag," he cried to Pleasants 236

Another figure approached him, hung over him . . 392

BOOK I

THE STORM BREWS

CHAPTER I

THE DREAMER

WINTER in the South and the morning of a day.

Three years had elapsed since Boyd Peyton had been in Alabama in the month of December. The young breeze, carrying with it the fragrance of lingering fall, as it swept across his face filled him with surprise, for the season had been unusually pleasant and mild. The air was almost balmy despite its touch of early morning coolness untempered by the new-risen sun, yet there was a freshness in it which reminded him of springtime in New England.

Coming directly as he had by the railroad from the bleak coast of Massachusetts, shivering in its ice-bound shores before the fierce northeasterly gales, it was with quite a sense of shock that he saw the late roses blooming at his feet as he leaned over the railing of the long gallery, or porch, surrounding the quaint old Southern house. There had been no frost yet, and the delicate white petals of the lingering blossoms were still untouched and perfect.

The train on which he had been a passenger had been delayed yesterday and he had reached home after nightfall; too late to see anything outside, at any rate. Then, in the excitement of greeting his family once more after a long period of separation, he had given no thought to climatic conditions or to anything external to them. Stop! The statement is hardly accurate, for in not one single moment, in all the joyousness of meeting, in all the exuberant affection given and received in his welcome home, had he lost mental sight of Mary Annan. This morning as he stared down at the garden of roses in winter his heart was full of her. So conscious of her had he been, in fact, so possessed with a sense of her nearness to him at last, that he had scarcely slept during the night.

In his restless anxiety to see her he had risen before any of the family, who slept later this morning than usual, possibly because they had remained up longer the night before. As soon as he was dressed he came out on the gallery, where he stood gazing alternately upon the roses or staring down through the long avenue of live-oaks toward the St. Francis Road, which led into the town where she dwelt. He could hardly wait for breakfast and a seemly hour to lay a course, as he would have phrased it, a-horseback on the white highway, which would bring him once more into her presence.

Presently he turned from the railing and began to pace the gallery. The house was a huge, rambling, old, one-story structure of wood with a high brick

basement. Two wings projected from the main building, and a wide porch above the basement, with many Doric columns supporting its roof, followed the outline around the front and sides. From one end of this gallery to the other was quite a distance, yet the young man, after walking half a dozen paces in one direction, instinctively turned on his heel and retraced his steps for the same distance back in regular swinging, quarter-deck style.

"How much one forgets," he thought as he methodically paced to and fro; "'tis but seven years since I left here first and but three years since I visited the old place, yet it all seems so strange. Before I went to the Academy I knew every stick and stone, every blade of grass almost. Well, I have not forgotten Mary Annan, at any rate. To be sure, she does not belong to the place. Ah, but she may some day. Who knows though, what will be the result of this election, what these hotheads will do?"

He laughed lightly as if in answer to a comment upon his thoughts, and then said aloud—he had the bad habit of talking to himself sometimes:

"These hotheads! I speak like a stranger in a strange land. Am I a stranger? Come, this will never do! Not yet eight o'clock," he continued, pulling out his watch and glancing at it. "I wonder what time this family is piped to breakfast? Well, there is nothing to do but wait, I suppose. I never could shake father out of his orderly ways, I remember, since I was a boy."

The young man was a sailor, an officer in the United

States Navy, a passed midshipman awaiting his commission as ensign, just returned from a three years' cruise in European and North African waters, subsequent to his graduation after four years of study in the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. He had been appointed to the Academy from Alabama seven years before, and was now just turned twenty-two. No one could look more unlike the typical bluff sailor than he. He was tall, slender, and brown-eyed, and the native darkness of his complexion, which his seafaring had deepened, with his thick brown hair, worn rather long, as was the fashion of the time, and slightly curling at the ends, would have betrayed him as a Southern man anywhere.

His appearance was gentle, his aspect dreamy. One would have pronounced him a poet, an artist, a musician—anything rather than a man of action. Without being gloomy there was a touch of gentle melancholy in his appearance. The curves of his lips indicated an innate sensitiveness and reserve which, had he not been thrown so constantly with his fellow naval officers in the society of the world's best, would have amounted to shyness. There was a little timidity —which did not spring from fear—in his address, a deferential modesty, especially when in the presence of women, or older men, that was charming, if somewhat lacking in decision. Yet he carried himself well. His movements were easy and graceful. He held his head high, and had about him that air of inborn authority peculiar to the Southern slave-owner and gentleman, which his naval rank and posi-

tion had served to emphasize. Whether he looked like a man of action or not, with his handsome face and distinguished bearing, he would be a marked figure anywhere.

What he might become in times of stress and danger was yet to be determined; what he was at that moment was quite evident—a dreamer! Like most of the dreams of youth, the object of his imaginations was a woman. Just a year since, his ship, returning from the Mediterranean, had wintered at Boston. When he had arrived there he had rejoiced to learn in letters from home that Mary Annan was attending school in Cambridge. Miss Annan was a young Alabama girl whom he had known from childhood, with whom he had grown up, in fact, in the frank intimacy subsisting between children of neighboring and distantly related families—all the gentle people of the South seemed to be more or less related in those days—and of whom, with ever-increasing interest, he had seen as much as he could in his brief visits home while he was a midshipman at the Academy.

He had welcomed, with an eagerness only possible to a Southerner and a young man, the opportunity of renewing his deepening acquaintance with his childhood friend and fair compatriot, and he had striven to make the most of it. Every moment he could take from his ship duties, or which she could steal from her not too engrossing studies, during the winter, the two had spent together in the quaint old Massachusetts town. There was some far away connection between the Peytons and the Annans, a common colonial an-

cestor in whom they found one of those Southern ties that bind, although they seem so tenuous to Northern minds, which gave him a kinsman's warrant and excuse for claiming her society—a fifteenth cousinship! Not close but, like Mercutio's wound, got between the two houses—it served!

The school was described in the catalogue as a "finishing school," a very popular sort of an institution in those days, and not unknown to history even now. So far as Mary Annan was concerned, its efforts were fruitless. She did indeed graduate from it in June with all the honors of the school, but she was very far from being finished, and he would be a very hardy prophet who should predict what the bright, beautiful, and charming Southern girl would be in the end. There was latent force in her; plenty of character, energy, self-will, and greater possibilities, but only the larger school of life could develop her. Ease might leave her no opportunity to serve. She might bloom like a flower under sunny skies until she faded away and came to naught; or trouble, sorrow, anguish, care, might bring out the woman. On the Alps, not at Capua, are made men.

There were many young girls facing pleasant prospects with smiling faces in those days, little dreaming of the grim and awful realities brewing for them in the swift approaching terrible years of '61-'65. Oh, blessed reticence of God that draws not aside the curtain of the veiled future, that answers not the prayer of the poet-king, "Lord, let me know my end and the number of my days, that I may be certified how

long I have to live!" 'Tis best for humanity sometimes to see through the glass darkly—or not at all.

A great besom of war and privation and anguish was then preparing for this country. Aye, it had been preparing since the *Jesus*—"A Dutch man-of-warre that sold us twenty Negars" as John Rolfe wrote—had landed the first cargo of African slaves at Jamestown in 1619—a holy name for so ill-omened a ship. A period of conflict was to ensue in which the finishing touches that only suffering could add should be put upon the characters of men and women all over the land. For the day on which Boyd Peyton returned to the home of his ancestors and the focal point of his heart's love was December 19, 1860, six weeks after the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency of the United States.

As a sailor, an officer in the navy, on active service in foreign waters, Peyton had hardly realized the well-nigh inevitable consequences to the country of that overwhelming declaration of popular opinion by the North. He had not dreamed that the feeling of a neighboring commonwealth upon the question of slavery and the relation of the new President and his party to it had become so intense and powerful that it was about to sweep one of the most honored States out of the Union and force upon other neighboring States and the men of the South an alternative, difficult for many of them to contemplate with any feelings save those of anxiety and regret.

In the early spring of the year, after the winter in Boston, his ship had sailed on a cruise to the North

African coast, whence it had just returned and been put out of commission the week before. Peyton had escaped the great debate and discussion of the spring and summer, the breaking up of the old Democratic party into two or three new ones, the forcing of sternly repressed and long-avoided issues to the front, the strife and bitterness, the threat and the counter-threat. What little Peyton knew of the situation had filtered to him through incomplete sources. Being removed from personal contact, he had not realized the situation at all. The matter had only been touched upon last night at his welcoming, and he was yet to learn the feeling of his father, his friends, his people, his love, upon the subject.

One wise philosopher has said that not more than one subject at a time can engage the attention of any body of people. Whether that be true of the mass or not need not be discussed, but when a young man has his head, no, his heart rather—two things usually diametrically opposed in love affairs—filled with the image of a woman, he does not usually find room for the consideration of anything else, unless the necessity for considering it is somehow thrust upon him.

On this morning Peyton had given no thought to the election or its consequences. At that moment, if he reflected upon it at all, he cared neither what the North might do nor what the South might do. He thought nothing as to what might be demanded of him, or what his course of action should be in any possible contingency—unless it concerned Mary Annan and his love for her. An observer might have

noticed that he walked his "porch watch" with his head turned toward the St. Francis Road, which led to Annandale, as a sailor might keep his glance fixed to windward. In this instance the weather-vane which determined the direction of his gaze was his heart. The heart of youth is not unlike the changeful weather indicator, it must be admitted; but his was different—more like the needle, swinging true to its pole, he would have said.

Well, the world about him might do what it would. It mattered nothing to him in that bright morning of hope. In an hour or two at most he would see her. He would be in her presence again. He would take her hand. He might not, he could not, kiss her, but he would look into her eyes once more. He could gaze upon her in her proper person, and see her as he had imagined her in his dreams through the long night-watches of the cruise.

In his letters to his sister he had taken care that news of his home-coming on a two months' leave of absence should reach Mary Annan. He had so contrived that the very day and hour of his arrival had been made known to her. Indeed, had not the train been so delayed last night he would have gone to her in the evening, but it was then too late, and he had been forced to content himself with anticipating this meeting in the morning. In spite of the lateness of the hour, however, he had directed the coachman to drive past her father's house on Government street on the way home. He had peered out of the carriage through the darkness at the familiar old house. There

were lights in windows here and there, and with a lover's yearning he had wondered in which chamber she might be enshrined.

No avowal of affection had yet passed between the young people. That certain timidity, that unwillingness to take the initiative, which was constitutional with him and which he had not yet overcome, but more especially a certain chivalry which made him loath to take advantage of their frank comradeship in that strange Yankee land where a premium might have been put upon him, he feared, merely because he happened to be a fellow Southerner, an Alabamian, kept him from declaring in outspoken words his heart. Nevertheless he was thoroughly sure that Mary Annan knew he loved her. There is an instinctive capacity in the most artless woman to read with unerring accuracy the heart of a man who loves her, especially when his heart is opened before her soul's vision, as Peyton's was to Mary Annan. He was sure that she knew he only waited a favorable opportunity to tell her of his passion.

His assurance all ended there, however. With airy mockery, with youthful audacity, with deliberate yet delightful elusiveness, she had met his advances. The most presumptuous wish could not delude him into the belief that she loved him. How could she, he had often thought in dejection? He felt that she regarded him as a visionary, which, indeed, he was. She had rallied him many times upon his dreamy abstraction. It was part of his character, too, that he should esteem himself unworthy of her. It is a part of every true

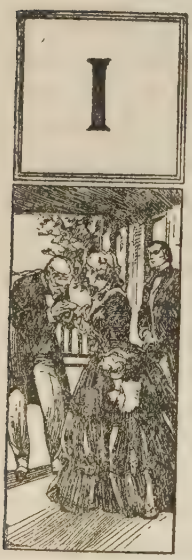
man's character to arrive at that conclusion when he compares himself to the woman he loves. There was a strange mingling, therefore, of foreboding and hope, anxiety and assurance, in his meditations on this morning.

There was no wavering in his desire and determination, however. He was resolved to win her. He would count no sacrifice too great for that end. As the resolution took shape in his fertile brain, a keen observer—a woman who loved him, for instance—would have noticed a tightening of his lips, which now, under the influence of some compelling internal force, seemed to lose something of their sensitiveness. His gracefully rounded chin protruded slightly, there was an unnoticed bluntness in it, after all; the softness in his eyes gave place to a harder expression, the brows straightened and drew together in lines. His face grew suddenly strong. His whole appearance was that of resolution.

It was astonishing indeed that the usual outward character of the man should have so suddenly given place to something so totally different. Something had transformed him. Something inward and spiritual had got the mastery for the moment over the outward and physical.

CHAPTER II

A HARD SITUATION FOR A MODEST MAN



"I WILL, I will!" he murmured, staring down at the road through the live-oaks.

As he spoke there was a step on the porch behind him, and a deep voice broke his reverie. It was as if a hand had touched a bubble. The mouth relaxed, the brows widened, the hands let go the rail, the former expression came back again. The youth, his old self once more, turned to meet his father.

"Dreaming again, Boyd!" said the elder reprovingly.

In appearance he was nearly the counterpart of his son, but with resolution added, decision acquired, and dreams long lost in tempering experience. His bushy hair was snow-white, although not from age, for he was just turned fifty. His thick drooping mustache and tufted imperial were also white. As he looked at his son he presented a stern, weather-beaten, war-worn face. Colonel Peyton had been a soldier. He had fought with distinction in the Mexican War fourteen years

before, and it was evident that his services would be valuable to whichever side he elected to give his sword in the coming strife, which he, at least, realized was inevitable. Old soldiers usually develop into the fat and red, or the thin and lean, kind of men. Colonel Peyton was of the latter class, although his temper was as quick and fierce as that of the most choleric and gouty old veteran. His voice was full and rich, and in pronunciation and accent betrayed his Southern characteristics beyond question. Boyd's voice was different. It was still Southern, but not markedly so. He had lived so long in the North and on the sea, and he had tried so hard to mould it in stereotyped form, that it had lost most of its distinguishing characteristics, and except when he was excited it was cosmopolitan and therefore monotonous.

"Dreaming again, Boyd! It's not good for an officer. I had hoped that your Naval Academy training, your experience as an officer, might get you out of that bad habit. But you are at it again, I see."

The older man frowned and shook his head hopelessly toward his son.

"No, father," said the young man quickly, "not dreaming when you spoke, but——"

"But what, sir?" Only he pronounced it "suh."

"Resolving."

"Ha, that's better! And resolving upon what, pray?"

"Resolving to take a wife, sir. If I can get her, that is, sir."

"A wife! A wife!" in sudden suspicion.

"A wife, sir," answered his son, firmly.

"How old are you now, sir?" asked his father, having partially digested the unexpected announcement.

"Just twenty-two, sir."

"You are young to speak of marriage, lad."

"Yes, sir, I am," answered Boyd promptly—it was astonishing what a stimulus to action the young man found in his alert father. "But it is a habit of our family, sir, as I have heard. Mother was sixteen, I think, when she married you, and you were no older than I am yourself then, sir."

"Well, er—yes, of course," said the colonel, rather taken aback by this strikingly direct, if smiling, charge, "I—er—who is the lady? I hope, Boyd, that you have not fallen in love with some foreigner in Europe, or——"

"No, sir."

"Nor with any Yankee girl. A man should marry among his own people, especially now. I——"

"Well, sir," interrupted Boyd hesitatingly, in a spirit of fun, "I met her in New England, at Boston, last winter, and I——"

"Boyd Peyton, don't tell me that you are going to marry outside of your own class!" thundered his father—"that you are going to ally yourself with one of those Northern tradespeople—with one of Lincoln's——"

No one could have exceeded the bitter contempt with which he spoke.

"Father," cried the young man hastily, seeing evidences of an explosion in the reddening face and excited manner of his father, "it is Mary Annan."

"Why, God bless me!" returned the older man, greatly relieved, grasping his son by the shoulders and giving him a little shake. "Why didn't you say so? Why, that girl is the pride of my life, the prettiest girl in Mobile, the belle of Alabama. You young dog! What do you mean by trying to fool your father in this way? My heart's been set upon it. It's the best thing that could have happened. I could not——"

"Hold on, father! It hasn't happened yet."

"Ha, what's that?"

"Well, sir, you see I haven't said anything to her as yet, and I don't know what she will do."

"Boyd Peyton, do you mean to tell me that you were a whole winter with that girl, and you a sailor, sir, an officer, damme, and you have not proposed to her yet?"

"Yes, sir, I——"

"Well, by gad, sir!" exploded the older man, "when I was a young man if I were in company with a charming girl like that for a week, and didn't propose to her, I would consider that I was reflecting on her character, by Jove! I always proposed to all the girls I——"

"What's that, Willis?" interrupted a sweet-voiced matron, joining the group on the porch, through the open door of the hall, "you always proposed to whom, sir?"

"Er — my dear — Lucy, I — er —" stammered the colonel, in much confusion. "You see, I meant to say I proposed to you the first time I saw you and kept it up regularly every week until you accepted me. That's all, my dear," he went on, with pardonable mendacity.

"Oh, indeed, sir!" laughed the lady. "Well, what are you rating Boyd for?"

"Because he hasn't proposed to Mary Annan."

"Mary Annan!" cried the young man's mother. "Does he love her?"

"Gad—begging your pardon, my dear—how could he help it? I almost love her myself," chuckled the colonel.

"Don't make any reservation on my account, colonel," retorted his wife composedly, coming nearer to him as she spoke, and laying her hand affectionately on his shoulder. "We old women cannot compete with young girls like Mary Annan, I know."

"My dear," said the colonel, taking her hand and bowing low over it, while he kissed the plump white fingers with charming old-fashioned deference and grace—a very polished gentleman, indeed, was her gallant husband, she thought—"Mary Annan can't hold a candle to you, and no other girl can, or could, that I ever saw, young or old. By Jove, Boyd, you should have seen your mother when she was Mary's age! The belle of the Old Dominion, sir, and the toast of Richmond, Washington, Baltimore, the White Sulphur, every place! Gad, sir, I was out with three young bucks before I——"

"Fie, Colonel, what an example for your son! But tell me, Boyd dear, do you love her?"

"Love Mary Annan, mother!" said the young man, much abashed at the publicity given to his love-affairs, yet forcing himself to speak boldly and answer her question, when he was interrupted a third time.

"Why, mother!" said Miss Pinkie Peyton, his sister, a young woman, just turned eighteen, as she joined the group on the porch, "if you had read his letters to me you would think the sun rose and set and the earth began and ended in Mary Annan. Love her!"

"That's as it should be," said the colonel decisively. "I used to feel that way about your mother, children."

"Used to feel that way, Colonel Peyton?" queried the matron, with an emphasis, easily understood, on the first word.

"I do now, indeed, and more and more every year," said the colonel hastily, anxious to repair his blunder.

"Sir," said Boyd, smiling, "it only remains to take Willis into our confidence now and hold a family council upon the situation."

"I know all about it," nonchalantly remarked Willis, the last member of the family to appear on the scene.

Willis Peyton was small of stature, being twin brother to Pink, but an alert, bright-appearing young fellow with no whit of his brother's abstracted habit of mind, apparently. He had overheard the latter part of the conversation.

"Pink, here, can't keep anything from me, her beloved twin brother, you know," he rattled on, "and

always asks my advice in affairs of the heart, her own or another's. I think I have been most judicious in getting your messages delivered to Miss Mary without her suspecting it, and if she ever marries you you'll owe me a debt of gratitude."

"Thanks, Willis," answered Boyd dryly. "And how about the lady?"

"Oh, she'll owe me nothing. Don't for the world tell her I had any hand in it; I don't wish to lose her regard on any account."

"Well, my son, have not you spoken to Mary?" interrupted his mother.

"No, mother, not yet."

"You have been most infernally—I beg your pardon, my love, but it's true—slow about it," said the colonel decisively, "but you must do it this very day."

"I know, of course, that she must know that I—that—but I—you see, father," he went on lamely, "I did not like to take advantage of her being alone in Boston. I was the only one of her people there, you know, and I thought it was proper to ask Judge Annan——"

"Ask nobody, sir, but the lady herself, sir!" snorted the colonel. "Bless me! Young men of to-day haven't any spirit at all!"

"Do you wish that rule to be carried out when somebody comes here for Pink?" asked Willis quickly.

"I reckon nobody is coming around after me at present, or at any time," interrupted Pink pertly, with a toss of her head.

"Well, if they know a good thing when they see it,

they will," responded Willis. "Don't you worry, Pinkie dear, I'll look out for you and steer you through the troubled waters of your love-affairs, if you will trust yourself to me. You'll be all right. Meanwhile——"

"Meanwhile," said Boyd, "I am going down to see Miss Mary as soon as breakfast is over."

"The idea of waiting until breakfast is over before you go to see your sweetheart!" exclaimed the provoking Willis, with exaggerated disgust. "Breakfast before love! That's modern chivalry!"

"It isn't that, youngster," said Boyd, catching him by his shoulders with a gesture strikingly like his father's; "you'll know when you're older that it isn't respectable to call on young ladies at such an hour."

"Oh, well, for that matter, being in love is not respectable anyway," answered Willis contemptuously.

"Boys, boys!" said their mother, half laughingly, wholly in earnest, "a man is never so worthy of respect as when he is in love—and remains in love. That's why I have such a high esteem for your father here."

"Of course, of course," said the colonel, swelling visibly at the compliment, "but here's Dinah, and breakfast is ready. Come on, Lucy. Love and breakfast I always found to harmonize admirably in my case. Both charming and both necessary. Come, children."

CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATION OF TEMPE

MISS TEMPE ANNAN was a singular mixture of the grave and the gay. Possibly it would be better to say that in her brief career she alternated impartially between these two extremes of deportment. Sometimes her exuberant spirits, entirely unrestrained, and unrestrainable apparently, made her the terror of the household, and of the neighboring households. At other times the solemnity which she assumed would have befitted the bench from which her father administered justice. Sometimes she shrieked and screamed with elfin mischief as she ran and romped and played through the old halls at Annandale, yet when her mood changed she was as demure and still as a little blind mouse.

This morning she was feeling deeply serious, not to say melancholy, for reasons various but sufficient. In the first place she was, as she would have phrased it, "dressed up." She was not yet old enough to enjoy at any and every time that process which she would find so delightful in later years. New clothes and best clothes made her miserable, especially when they

were put on without rhyme or reason. It was not Sunday. She expected to be "dressed up" then, and had become resigned to it. It was not dinner-time either, when such things sometimes happened, nor did she know of any expected company, in whose honor she should appear becomingly attired. An unaccountable dejection consequent upon a sense of being unnecessarily "fixed up" overwhelmed her, as it has wiser and older people.

She sat primly on a low stool, her plump little white-stockinged legs, with crossed ankle ties on her feet, stretched rigidly before her in pointed objection. Her pink merino frock, trimmed with three elaborate flounces each edged with pink fringe, which, under proper circumstances, she loved to contemplate as a thing of abstract beauty, and of which by fits and starts she was inordinately proud, was partially hidden by a white bib apron, which she hated. Her gown was cut with low neck and short sleeves, of course, but a little blue sack with pinked edges protected her arms and shoulders. Beneath the hem of her skirt peeped out an inch or two of highly embroidered pantalettes, garments much the fashion then, but which she thoroughly loathed. She was not old enough, as was said before, to love the fashion irrespective of what it might be. That capacity or faculty feminine would probably come to her in time, as it does to most of the daughters of women as well as to some of the sons of men!

The fact that she was at that moment seated in the great best room also oppressed her. She was rarely

permitted to enter the confines of that mysterious quarter, which in accordance with the current fashion —a custom still prevalent in the South—was usually kept tightly closed, and which resembled a sarcophagus more than anything else, save when some rare and festive occasion demanded its opening. Tempe did not yet know enough to phrase it that way, but in her present state of mind she could have felt ready sympathy with any royal corpse to be interred therein. This morning, however, while in deference to custom, both blinds and curtains closed the front, on the side the curtains were drawn before the long French windows, which opened upon the garden, and the shutters were thrown back so that the cheerful sunshine entered the room and served, if not to lighten it wholly, at least to discover Miss Tempe's gloom.

The child might have endured all these things, however, had it not been for an open book in the hand of a young lady who sat beside her. That open book meant to Miss Tempe an unlearned lesson—most of Tempe's lessons were unlearned. So are most of everyone else's, by the way. The crisis in which she found herself was an educational one; in short, she was there to have her lessons heard, a thing which Miss Tempe, in common with most little maidens of six, and older, detested.

"Now, Tempe dear," began her companion gently, when the two had settled themselves, one comfortably and the other without any modification of her stubborn predetermined discomfort, before the wood fire crackling and burning cheerfully in the open grate,

"now Tempe, you really must say your lessons. Yesterday I let you off, the day before you were ill, but you must do them to-day."

"Yes, sister Mary," said Tempe meekly, while her black eyes rolled around the apartment vainly seeking for help from the pictured worthies, masculine and feminine, dead and gone Annans, in oval gilt frames that adorned the walls, and Tempe had the blackest pupils set in the whitest eyes you ever saw. When she opened them widely and fixed them upon you the effect was startling. Tempe spoke with a lisp, too slight to indicate, but just enough to be attractive. Her pronunciation was strikingly like her sister's. They both had soft Southern voices, a slight blur upon the vowels, *ah's* for *r's*, all too delicate and dainty to yield to any attempt at phonetic presentation on the printed page, without distortion, complete misrepresentation, and entire loss of the charm of it. The woman's voice had that dimness of outline we see in a modern photograph which is sufficiently out of focus to have lost its hardness and is become indefinitely charming. There are times when the sharp and precise are abominable.

"Yes, sister Mary," the little one said submissively for the second time.

"Now, where'll we begin, dear?"

"I reckon we'd better begin at the beginning."

"Very well, then. We will have our spelling lesson first. Spell 'ab.' "

"A-b, ab," answered Tempe promptly.

It was the beginning and foundation of her educa-

tional efforts and the one fact of which she was absolutely confident. Good beginnings, however, do not always produce good endings. After "a-c, ac," "a-d, ad," and the next two or three similar illuminating efforts Tempe was stumped. She rolled her eyes wider, wiggled her toes nervously, and almost turned herself inside out before she stopped in a mixture compounded of equal parts of hopeless mental confusion and physical entanglement. With gentle patience her sister set about the oft-repeated task of unraveling her in both cases. She carefully untwisted her fascinating, shapely, plump little legs, and with convincing iteration and unvarying patience went over the disputed words again and again, until a semblance of appreciation seemed to be established in Tempe's mind—or was it ear?

Tempe's strong point, however, was not so much spelling as reading, and after half an hour's arduous drill the well-worn spelling book gave place to a small first reader. At her sister's instigation Tempe arose and stood by her side, and both heads bent low over the volume, while, with agonies unspeakable and contortions even more violent than before, the small child endeavored to extract from the printed page the information that "The cat had the rat." It was a simple sentence though expressive of a profound, and to the rat, a painful, zoological fact, but Tempe always required a great deal of prompting, and her mental processes—where books were concerned, otherwise not—craved much stimulation. The first word apparently was a blank.

"Now, honey," said her sister persuasively, "look at it, look at it hard ! What is that first letter?"

"H," answered the child promptly, making a desperate guess.

"No, it's not 'h.' It looks a little like a part of an 'h,' but it isn't. What do we have for supper?"

"Cake," said Tempe triumphantly. "But it isn't cake, sister Mary, is it?"

"No, it isn't cake, Tempe, and you know it isn't," said sister Mary severely. "It's 't,' *tea*, you know."

"I don't have tea for supper. You said I was too little to have tea for supper. I don't know how I could 'member that it was tea."

"Well, it is 't.' Now remember that. Now, what is the next letter?"

"H," said Tempe, with clinging affection for her first guess, which proved in this instance, to her great surprise, to be correct.

"Yes; and the next?"

"E," triumphantly, being with "round O" and "chooked S" the three letters she always knew at sight.

"Now what does that spell—'t-h-e'?"

"These," said Tempe, making another bold and reckless guess.

"No, it spells 'the.'"

"'The,' I'll 'member, 'the.'"

"Now, the next word. You surely know what that is."

Tempe carefully screwed her head one side and bravely contemplated the word. Assisted by a large

and impossible picture at the top of the page, she finally came to the conclusion that it was "Cat." "Had," however, was Greek to her. Then came a repetition of the first word. Again Tempe was stumped. She gazed from book to sister in voiceless misery.

"Now, Tempe," urged her sister, almost ready to cry herself over her little pupil's obduracy, "you had that word a little while ago. Don't you remember? What do we have for supper?"

"You said it wasn't cake," remarked Tempe dubiously.

"I did. It was something to drink, you know."

"Milk?" queried the child anxiously.

"Tea, 't!' Don't you remember?"

"Oh, yes, sister Mary, 't,' and that's 'the.' An' I know the next word. 'Rat,' ain't it?"

"It is, but don't say 'ain't.' What should you say?"

"Peggy says 'ain't.' "

"Yes, but Peggy is only a little black girl. You must say 'isn't.' Now that you have said it, say the whole thing over again."

"The cat," began Tempe confidently, and then suddenly stopped stock-still. She stood for a moment staring past her sister's head toward the door entering into the hall.

"Yes, go on. What are you waiting for? What comes next? 'The cat——' "

But Tempe remained obstinately silent. The girl glanced up from the book to ascertain the cause of the sudden stillness, saw the petrified stare upon her

"Why, Boyd Peyton," she exclaimed, ". . . what a surprise!"

little sister's face, turned her head in the direction of her gaze, dropped the book, and sprang to her feet with an ejaculation of delighted surprise.

"Why, Boyd Peyton!" she exclaimed, utterly forgetful of her little sister. "How glad I am to see you! Welcome to Annandale! What a surprise!"

"Didn't you know I was coming, Miss Mary? I thought that Pink and Willis——"

"Oh, yes, I knew it, of course, but your coming upon us so suddenly, you know, startled me."

"Forgive me," he said contritely, "I would not let the boy announce me. I wanted to surprise you."

"It's all right, but come right in and sit down. When did you get into town? How long are you going to stay? Why haven't you been to see me before?"

She poured out her questions upon him in a perfect torrent.

"I only got here last night, quite too late to visit you then, so I rode down the first thing this morning. I wanted to come the minute I got into town. The fact is, I believe I thought of seeing you more than I did father or mother or anybody else."

"You believe you did!" with a toss of the head and a suspicious emphasis on the second word.

"I am sure of it," confidently.

"Please, ma'am, sister Mary," interrupted Tempe, "may I go now?"

"Yes, dear, run and play."

"But my lessons aren't finished," persisted the child,

who suddenly developed an unexpected and very unusual thirst for knowledge.

"Oh, that's all right. I'll hear them after a while. Say good-morning to Mr. Peyton, and run along."

"How do you do, Miss Tempe?" said Peyton gravely, as the child walked over to him and extended her small brown hand.

"I am very well, sir, an' I hope you are the same."

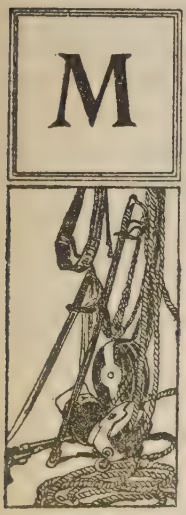
"Thank you, I am," laughed the young man. "My, how you have grown! You were such a little girl when I saw you last. Now you are quite a young lady, and so dressed up, too."

"Yes, Mr. Peyton, sister Mary dressed me up this morning. These are my best clothes. I don't see why she did it. It ain't—it isn't, I mean—Sunday, and I'm not going to a party. An' I had my lessons in the best parlor, too. Did you dress me up, sister Mary, because Mr. Peyton was coming?"

Sister Mary blushed violently, and, to cover her confusion, Peyton slipped a box of candy he had brought with him into the hand of the child and bade her run and eat it. In fact, he accompanied her to the door and stood looking after her for a few moments with thoughtful consideration before he returned to his seat.

CHAPTER IV

MARY ANNAN WILL NOT BE MADE LOVE TO



MARY ANNAN had recovered her composure, in some measure, at least, by a violent effort, but when Peyton sat down again an awful silence ensued.

"You are the same old Boyd Peyton as ever, I see," she said at last to him. "You have not seen me for six months, and haven't said half a dozen words to me, and now you are actually dreaming in my presence."

"I have been dreaming about your presence ever since I saw you last, Miss Mary, and it is natural that I should dream on while I'm here. Besides, I was wondering——"

He stopped again.

"Wondering about what?" she asked somewhat impatiently.

Not a bit of a dreamer, she; at least not yet.

"Wondering if the child spoke the truth."

"Children usually do, duplicity comes later."

"At what age?"

"I've not lived long enough to find out, sir," wittily

answered the girl, smiling at his confusion. "But you were wondering about Tempe?"

"Yes, wondering whether you did dress her up for —whether you were—whether you really——"

He stopped lamely enough and looked gravely away from her. She laughed merrily.

"Whether I expected you? Of course I did. I knew you were coming. I expected you last night, and when you didn't come I was awfully disappointed, but I knew you would be here this morning. I have been anticipating this moment for a long time. Hence this open parlor, this blazing fire, Tempe's best dress, and all the rest. Things have been made ready for your reception," she went on audaciously, bowing low before him with mocking reverence. "Now your first question is answered, tell me how did you leave Boston?"

"Cold, gloomy, frozen. You never saw anything like it."

"Did you see Miss Metcalfe before you left?"

"Yes, I called at the school and the old lady sent you her best love."

"She was a sweet old soul," said the girl.

"Yes," he assented heartily. "You remember she let us go out together pretty much whenever we wanted to. It was so nice of her."

"Oh, well, she looked upon you as my brother almost, of course."

"But you didn't look upon me that way, did you?" he asked anxiously.

"Why, no, not exactly," she answered, "you see I

have only one brother, and Beverly is only thirteen. He is away at school, by the way. Now you are too old for me to regard you as that kind of a brother."

"Oh, Miss Mary, I don't want you to regard me as any kind of a brother at all. I have come a long way to tell you."

"Oh, Mr. Boyd, don't!" cried the girl, rising to her feet again. "We had such a good time together in Boston that I counted on having the same good time while you were at home on this leave of absence, and now you are going to spoil it all, I know you are."

"Now, please don't say that," he interrupted pleadingly, "I didn't think you would be so annoyed to learn that I——"

"But I don't care for you in that way," she continued impulsively, then suddenly stopped in great confusion, realizing that she had not been asked as yet to care for anybody in any way.

"Well, Miss Mary," said Peyton, greatly abashed, "I will respect your wishes, of course. I shall always do so. Everything you may say is law to me." Oh, the rash promises of youth and love! "Whatever you wish me to do I will do. That is, I won't say anything now, but I have only a short leave of absence, you know, and before I go back you must at least let me tell you that I—I— well, I will tell you it when I tell you, you see."

His words were entirely confused and lame, but the girl easily comprehended.

"I wish you wouldn't," she said truthfully, "I do not

believe it will be any use, but if you must, you must, and we'll put aside the disagreeable subject," with cutting but unconscious frankness, "until we—we have to. Do you know how old I am?"

"You will be eighteen on the third of January," he answered promptly.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed, "how did you get it down so pat?"

"Why—I—you see—I—oh, dear, it is so hard not to say it! I like you so much, Miss Mary—I may say that, surely?" deprecatingly.

"Yes, you may go that far, I think," with injudicious concession.

"Well, then, I like you so much that I have tried to learn all about you," triumphantly pressing his advantage.

"From whom have you learned about me?"

"Why, from everybody who would talk to me about you, or would write about you," he went on in some embarrassment.

"So you have been writing about me, have you?" severely.

"Miss Mary, I have been writing about you, thinking about you, dreaming about you——"

"Stop, Mr. Boyd!" she cried, lifting a warning hand, "stop right there!"

"All right," he replied, recovering himself with difficulty.

"Now tell me about your leave of absence."

"I have two months."

"Isn't that fine!"

"I think it is a very short time to spend—with you. It doesn't seem fine to me at all."

"Have you passed your examinations?"

"Yes. Went through them with flying colors. Expect to be an ensign before my leave is up."

"Good! I congratulate you!"

"Yes, Miss Mary, and you know an ensign's pay is very much more than that of a passed midshipman. Most fellows marry when they get to be ensigns," he continued, with insinuating meekness, looking carefully away from her while he spoke.

"Very foolish indeed of them, I think," she replied coldly, resolutely oblivious to the indirect suggestion. "The idea! Mere boys as they are!"

"You know I am past twenty-two," meekly.

"No, I didn't know it. You don't look it, and just now you don't act it, either. You see, I haven't made your life the subject of such exhaustive study as you have given mine."

"No, I suppose not," he answered dejectedly. "My career has been so unimportant heretofore that it would not be worth while to look it up."

"And has mine been of such importance, Mr. Peyton?"

"Of the greatest to me, and it will be as long as I live," he answered promptly, ready to take instant advantage of the opening.

"Boyd Peyton," said the girl sternly, determined to put an end to this if she could, "if you were ordered to do a thing by your superior officer would you obey him, or would you not?"

"Obey him, of course," answered Peyton.

"Would you try to evade his commands, or would you obey absolutely?"

"Absolutely, certainly."

"Well, then I ordered you—and you promised to obey me—you promised not to say anything about—about that subject, you know, for the present, that is, and you have done nothing but make love to me since you came in this room. I won't have it! It must stop!"

"Don't you like me to do it?" he questioned, with such simplicity and directness that it almost took her breath away.

"Like you to do it?" she returned, in confusion and perturbation. "Well, I—but you wish me—to—respond and I——"

"Honestly, now, Miss Mary, you said you had not reached the age of duplicity. Honestly, now! Does it displease you very much to have me—I won't say it, of course, but you know what I mean."

"Well, no—I don't exactly dislike it—but, dear me, how tiresome this is! Let's talk of something else! You have just come from the North. How do they feel about Lincoln's election?"

"Why, jubilant, of course, naturally enough, I think. You see, I didn't remain in Boston a minute longer than necessary. I rushed down here to——"

"There you go again," severely, with upraised finger of warning.

"To see father and mother," he continued hastily, "as quick as I could. So I really know very little

about it. I did hear some talk, though, on the train."

"What do they say? Are they going to fight?"

"Fight!" he ejaculated in astonishment. "Fight whom?"

"Fight us, fight the South."

"Of course not! Why should they fight?" with still greater surprise.

"Boyd Peyton, do you mean to tell me that you don't know that Lincoln is going to send his hirelings down here to take away our slaves, and make citizens of them, and voters, and social equals, and all that sort of thing?"

"No," said the young man promptly, "I do not believe he intends to do anything of the kind, and he could not do it if he would. I have read his platform, and his letter of acceptance, and some of his speeches, and they do not say one word about doing such things."

"Boyd Peyton," said the girl again, leaning forward and looking at him intently, "do you mean that you are a Republican?"

Words could hardly express the scorn and contempt with which she flung that last word at him, and there was a note of anxiety as well in her question.

"Certainly not," answered Peyton promptly; "I am a Democrat."

"Yes, but what kind of a Democrat—the Southern kind or the other?"

"Why," said the young man, "since I am a Southerner I suppose I belong to the Southern kind."

"You suppose so! If you had been here on election day," persisted the girl, "would you have voted for Douglas or Breckinridge?"

"Well," answered Peyton, greatly surprised at her vehemence, "not being here at that time, and being in the navy and cruising at sea three thousand miles from the United States, instead, I really did not give the subject much thought. I think on general principles I should have voted for Douglas, but," he went on hastily, as he saw a cloud sweep over her face—"but I am not set upon that conclusion, in any way. I would cheerfully be convinced if anybody would show me any reason to the contrary. I am open to argument——"

"I am glad to hear it, Mr. Boyd," said the girl, "father was a Whig, you know, and I believe he voted for Douglas, but I am a straight out-and-out Southern girl and for Breckinridge every time!"

"Well, at least, if your father voted for Douglas, there must be something to be said for him," Peyton urged deferentially.

"I think father was awfully mistaken," the girl went on with a positiveness that made her companion smile, "but you know how obstinate he is. If he makes up his mind to do a thing and thinks it is right, why, the world could not move him; leastways, I can't."

"It is the same thing," said Peyton audaciously.

"What is?"

"You and the world."

"Yes, but not to father," laughed the girl; "I am only a very small part of it to him."

"Yes, I have noticed," he answered, "that fathers

as a rule are rather blind to the qualities of their children. But why do you think there is going to be any fighting?"

"I did not say I thought there was going to be any fighting, Mr. Boyd," answered the girl. "In fact, I don't think there will be, for the reason that I do not believe the Yankees will fight. At least, I think they will be afraid to get into a fight with the South. You know they say that one Southerner can whip five Yankees, anyway."

"Yes," said Boyd grimly, "I have heard that before, but I do not believe it."

"Boyd Peyton, are you turning traitor to the South?"

"Certainly not. I am simply stating facts. I know it is not true that one Southern man can whip five Yankees; at least, not in every case, because I tried it."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I didn't try five Yankees at once; I tried one at a time, when I first went to the Academy, and out of five tries I think I got four lickings, and they were good ones, too!"

"What!" exclaimed the girl scornfully, "do you mean to tell me that you fought with your fists? I did not think that gentlemen——"

"Hold on, Miss Mary!" cried Boyd, "you wouldn't have a school full of boys go at each other with swords or pistols?"

"That's the Southern way," proudly.

"Yes," he returned, "but it isn't the best way. We fought it out with our fists in good, honest style, and

I have not four warmer friends in the world than those fellows. I respect them because they conquered me, and they respect me, I think, because I knew how to take a beating."

"Yes, you may have been beaten by them," cried the girl passionately, resentful of his indifference to a defeat of the South in his person, and comprehending his slender frame in a cruel glance, as she spoke, "but if some other man, Mr. Bob Darrow, for instance, had been in your place he might have whipped the whole five—if he had condescended to fight with fists."

Peyton's face flushed a deep dull crimson. The curves of his mouth tightened again. There came once more that same squareness of jaw, that contraction of the brow. He looked positively forbidding for the moment, as he turned toward her. She shrank back before his dark visage in sudden alarm, but he recovered himself by a violent effort.

"Wasn't that just a little unkind of you, Miss Mary?" he asked at last, unable to control a quiver of pain in his voice, for which he hated himself. "Darrow is afraid of nothing, I know, and he has the physical strength at his command to carry him through almost anything. You are right. I believe he would have whipped them all. I am not so strong as he, and frankly I do not like fighting simply for the sake of fighting. But I want you to believe I did the best I could, and I wasn't whipped until I had been so pounded up that I could not strike another blow, and I was just as quick to defend the South as he would have been."

"Forgive me, Boyd," said Mary in deep contrition, made the more severe by the manly, gentle, kindly way he had taken her thoughtless but wounding words. "It was most unkind of me. I am ashamed of myself. I did not mean it at all. I know you are as brave as a lion."

"I am not," answered Peyton truthfully, "I am not brave at all. I loathe to fight. War, battle, bloodshed, are horrible to me. I have a terrible shrinking in my soul at the thought of them."

"Yet you have done it, you would do it again?" asked the girl wonderingly.

"Oh, yes, of course. A man has to; no gentleman can be insulted, you know. One must do his duty. As you say, Darrow is a different sort of a man. He would fight because he likes it. I do not believe he knows what fear is. He is no dreamer, but a man of action."

CHAPTER V

MARY ANNAN CHANGES HER MIND

PEYTON turned away from her and walked toward the window. She looked at him half in pity, half in admiration. She did love the type represented by Darrow; she was too young and too inexperienced to have learned that in every age it is the dreamer who creates the ideal and compasses it at every sacrifice, who masters the world; yet for the present her thoughts were Peyton's and she hesitated as to what to do. She had been hard to him, and she was sorry. She liked him. That liking might develop into something more as her character formed — although she did not realize that at the time—or it might not, but anyway she really believed she liked him better than anyone else, unless it were Bob Darrow. If he lacked the other's splendid physical perfections, things usually accompanying such splendid courage as he exhibited, still Peyton was a handsome fellow, especially in his uniform. She knew that she had grievously wounded him. However, as she had little time for deliberation,

she did the best thing that could have been done under the circumstances; with womanly intuition she did nothing. Only the wisest know when to do nothing, and oftentimes a woman's instinct transcends the wisdom of the ages. Sheba's queen was not unfit to stand beside Solomon. With gracious tact, as if the subject were dismissed and forgotten, she stepped over to the window by his side.

"Open it," she said quietly, catching up a light shawl from the chair, "and let us go into the garden together, into the sunlight."

"It is always sunlight where you are, Miss Mary," he remarked, with swift gratitude, as he obeyed her commands, and together they went out on the porch.

"How sweet the old garden looks!" he continued, as they descended the gallery and stepped on the grass, which was still as green and bright as it had been in midsummer in the North. A tall hedge of box screened the young people from the observation of passers-by on Government Street. They were alone in the garden.

Annandale, romantic name which carried with it reminiscent memories of the ancient Scottish home, the seat of the family, stood in the midst of a square of the city and the grounds surrounding it were spacious and ample. Right in the centre of the lawn rose a gigantic live-oak, its trunk separated a few feet above the ground into huge gnarled limbs, which, with many tortuous windings, extended far over the yard in every direction. The writhed and twisted branches

suggested a growth of centuries, and centuries of struggle at that.

"That old tree is still the same," he said.

"Yes," said the girl, "a little older but no different. It does not change. Come," extending her hand, "let us go to it."

"Do you remember when I was here three years ago? I used to put you up in it," he said, as they walked under the branches toward its trunk.

"Yes, I remember."

"Allow me. 'Twas this way."

He seized her by the waist by both hands—she was a slender young thing as yet and, before she could prevent him, by a great effort he lifted her up to the lowest limb and set her down upon it. Then he stood trembling a little, his dark face flushed by the violence of his exertion. She was heavier than he had thought, yet he would rather have died than fail to place her there after he had started to do it. In spite of his philosophy he still smarted under her allusion to Bob Darrow's superior strength.

"Why, Mr. Boyd!" exclaimed the girl, leaning her back against the trunk, and settling herself comfortably on the limb. "Mr. Bob Darrow himself could not have done it better. I didn't think you were so strong."

"Has Darrow been lifting you up here?" he questioned jealously.

"Of course not!" indignantly. "Nobody ever dared to do such a thing before. And don't you dare do it again, Mr. Peyton!"

"Mary," whispered Peyton, "don't say that. I'd love to spend my strength and my life just lifting you up."

"You are incorrigible," she answered.

"Yes, I am incorrigible in loving you!"

She put up her hand, but he would not be stayed. She had yet to learn that there is no power on earth that can keep a man who loves a woman from telling that woman he loves her when he feels that the woman wants to hear him, and almost every woman wants to hear! Mary Annan certainly did not love Boyd Peyton. At least, not then. She liked him extremely. She was actually fond of him. No one could have been more welcome than he when he had visited her during that long winter in Boston. Her heart had gone out to him then, and perhaps if he had mustered courage to put his fate to the touch during that happy season, he might have found his fortune in her affection. But delays are dangerous, not only in proverbs. He had lost the advantage of his unique position, as the only Southern man in touch with her, through his scrupulous delicacy of feeling; and when she returned home to find herself promptly adored by half the eligible young men of Mobile and Southern Alabama, Boyd Peyton had not made sufficient impression upon her heart to have attained that permanent and lasting position which alone could satisfy him.

Yet she was by no means disposed to dismiss him out of hand. The young lady was just tasting the sweets of power, the power of womanly beauty and

feminine charm, both of which she wielded in great measure over the manly hearts of her adorers. She was not yet surfeited with devotion, and while she remained heart whole and fancy free, she clung with pretty feminine covetousness to each old, and welcomed with innocent avidity, each new admirer. The truth was, she did not wish to marry anyone at present, and she certainly loved no one.

Many Southern girls—most of them possibly—and many Northern girls, as well, were married and had children at her age, but she had no mind to make an early marriage. In many respects she was not much more than a child, although her position as head of her widowed father's household, gave her, on occasion, a degree of dignity and self-possession greater than might have been expected.

If the truth be told, she was a great deal of a coquette; not viciously so, but from the pure joy of being loved. Indeed the graciousness of her sympathy which made her take cognizance of the various degrees of the alleged sufferings confided to her by aspirants for her hand, whom she neither dismissed nor accepted, made her kinder than the strict canons of conduct might have permitted; but it was a kindness which bred no familiarity. The careful reserve in which Southern girls of her day and station were trained, would have prevented that, if any of her admirers had so far forgotten himself as to deviate from those chivalrous standards of conduct which were the pride of the Southern gentleman.

No one, however, stood higher in her affection than

the sailor, unless it might be Mr. Bob Darrow. In some instinctive way she realized that she was not yet capable of forming a sound judgment as to whom to entrust the making or marring of her life, so far as another could do it. Though she had been finished at the "finishing school," it did not yet appear what she should be. In spite of her years, and a woman developed more rapidly and earlier in the warm sunny South than in the colder North, there was about her a delightful air of immaturity. Not the immaturity that is callow and ignorant, but the immaturity of innocence, physical and mental. The sweet slender figure was full of delicious promise. The quick agile mind predicated delightful capacities and pointed to realizations the more grateful because somewhat delayed.

As Peyton leaned against the tree upon which she sat, as close to her as he could possibly get without actually touching her, and as he looked adoringly up into her soft brown eyes, she found it rather pleasant, after all. Her eyes were not always soft, either. Sometimes they sparkled with light as the breaking wave does upon the storm-tossed sea, and sometimes they swam steadily with the depth of a still pool that compasses upon its surface a picture of the deepest heaven—as they did at that moment. As the young lover marked the slow rise and fall of the girlish bosom, as his eyes fell upon the scarlet ribbon of her mocking lips, as he watched the flush of warm color in her dark cheek—rich hue that the rose might have envied—he longed to throw the restraints of custom

to the four winds of heaven and clasp the girl in his arms. It was not the first, nor would it be the last, time a lover's heart rebelled against such restraints.

The gentle wind laden with the dying fragrance of the fall, in riotous profanation lifted the long brown curls that fell upon her shoulders—oh, wanton wind! The same breeze blew aside the long full skirt she wore and disclosed the dainty little feet, dangling close to his side, and clad in black cloth heelless ankle ties, quite like those that Tempe had worn, and to his fatuous vision but slightly larger. The wind afforded him ravishing glimpses of her slender ankles in their white stockings, making him long to throw himself upon his knees and press kisses of adoration upon her shoes even. All the fire and passion of the past which he had repressed so long quivered in his voice and shone in his glance, as he turned his face up toward her and spoke to her. The day, the hour, the place, the position, all the witchery of the woman possessed him. There was a mocking-bird singing somewhere near them, as only they can sing in the South, and his words blended with this love-song of nature.

"It's out now," he murmured; "what's the use of trying to conceal it or evade it. Every look, every word, every movement of mine must have betrayed me. I didn't say anything to you in Boston— not in words, that is. You see, I was afraid, for one thing; and for another, I did not want to take advantage of you. I was the only friend you had, the only man, and I had known you from a child. I was a Southerner, and I —and we," he went on softly, "we love the South.

Had I been born in New England I should have loved the South since it is your. land. And you were so young. You might have said 'Yes' then."

In spite of herself, the girl, listening in dreamy abandon to his passionate pleading, nodded her head softly.

"Oh," cried Peyton, conscious of her slightest motion, "would you have said 'Yes?' "

"I might," she whispered, "then——"

"And now?" he questioned eagerly.

"Oh, now—it is different now. Don't ask me, Boyd."

"I must! Is it because there is someone else?"

"No, there is no one. You see the little Southern bird that was so lonesome up North is out of the cage now and she loves—she loves everybody." She spread her hands abroad with a delicious gesture. "There isn't anyone in particular, but all—you, as well as the rest. I like you, oh, very much, and if you are awfully in love with me, as you say you are, I am very sorry for you. I am sorry for them all."

"All?" he queried jealously. "What do you mean by that?"

"Why, I mean all the men who are in love with me and that I am not in love with. They all talk as you do, Boyd."

"Don't!" he protested vehemently. "I cannot believe that the ephemeral affection of the men you meet can be likened to my feeling. I tell you," he continued almost fiercely, "you do not dream how I love you. We sailors are lonely folk. Do you know. do

you realize, that winter in Boston was the only one I ever spent in the society of a girl, a woman? Are you a woman, I wonder?"

"Am I a woman, indeed!" indignantly and with surprise.

"Yes, I know, in years, perhaps, but at heart only a child."

"A child, sir! Well, perhaps! And if you knew other women, may be you wouldn't care so much for me."

"It would not make any difference; I'd care for no one else. You are all. Ah, when I sailed away last spring and left you I took with me such a memory of you as completely possessed me. I did my duties, of course; I had been so trained. That's a part of life, to do one's duty. I lived on the ship. I mingled with the others. My body was on the African coast but my soul was where you were. I was absent-minded, distrait. My shipmates rallied me upon it. It was your fault. I was thinking of you, dreaming of you."

Was he dreaming again, she wondered, bending to look at him. No, his eyes were fixed upon her, his glance burned her, yet it was fascinating. The poet in him was speaking to his ideal. That was she. Others had not wooed this way. She was not in love but she was a woman, and she listened with a wildly beating heart. He compelled her to do so, and if she did not yet love the man, she loved to hear his words.

"The breeze of summer wove songs about your name through the rigging," he continued, in that low voice with its passionate cadence. "When the moon-

light beat upon the low-lying sands of the tropic shore the mist wreathed itself into figures whose airy grace suggested you to me. Not a wave that caressed the keel of the ship that did not ripple with the music of your laughter. I could shut my eyes and hear it now."

He suited the action to the word, leaned his head against the tree-trunk and was silent for a little space. The bird sang no longer now and she wondered if he could hear her heart beating in that silence. She wished he would go on.

"I welcomed the night watches," he said at last. "They were never lonely to me. I could pace the deck and think of you, you, only you, with nothing to disturb or distract me. Yes, yes, I am a dreamer, as you have said, but I did not create an ideal, I found it in you. Beloved, you know not what this has meant to me. You do not know what it means now. I said you were a child, and you are. But some day you will be a woman, and then you will understand. Perhaps it is not altogether you now that I love, that I worship, but what I see in you, what you will be."

She took no offence at his frankness, but listened, drinking in every word.

"I have made you the object of my ambition, the end and aim of my life. Every hope that I cherish centres in you. Every desire that I entertain has you for its realization. I long to do something for you, to have some task set me, some great achievement placed before me, that I may show you what love means. I ask nothing now. I am content to stand

here below you and look up at you, to kiss the hem of your garment."

Again he suited the action to the word, with a reverence which touched her soul.

"To be near you is enough now, but some day I must have more. I must have all. Until that time comes and you come to me with it, I shall wait. No, not patiently, not willingly, but because I must. Do you understand?"

His voice had grown softer as he spoke. How handsome he looked with his head thrown back, his eyes confirming every word that his lips had uttered! The being of the girl thrilled in response to the feeling and passion in his love-making. She bowed to that revelation of his heart.

"I understand," she murmured in answer at last; "speak on. There is music to my heart in what you say. I am a child. I do not know yet what love means as you know it, as you have told it. But perhaps I shall learn. You may teach me, and with such a master may I be an apt pupil. Here is my hand upon it."

He seized the slender, graceful brown hand she extended, and with old-fashioned grace—alas that the custom has gone!—pressed a long kiss upon it while she continued:

"There is no one else yet, and I hope——" Her voice sank to a whisper. She turned her head away. A rift of sunlight drifted through the trembling foliage and fell upon her hair and burnished it with color. "I hope," she murmured, withdrawing her hand and lay-

ing it upon his head, "that some day it may be as you wish."

"Thank God! Thank God," he exclaimed, "for that blessed assurance, and may He bring all my dreams to pass!"

And above them the mocking-bird burst into song again.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE SHELL ROAD

HIGH noon and high tide on the Shell Road. The sunlight was flooding the waters of Mobile Bay extending unbroken from the shore as far as eye could see. Below the broad splendid road on the bluffs, a lonely stretch of white sand contrasted vividly with the deep tropic blue of the water, tossed into a thousand white capped waves by the fresh breeze. The gray road following the curves of the shore was untenanted at the moment save by three persons on horseback.

Although he was a sailor—and men of the sea are proverbially indifferent horsemen—Boyd Peyton rode with the ease of a Southern cavalier long accustomed to the saddle. His companion was a good match for him. He had never seen Mary Annan upon a horse before, at least not since he was a child when he had taken little note of such things, but the easy grace with which she sat her spirited and high-bred horse, the skill with which she managed him therefore the more delighted him.

She wore a close-fitting riding habit of navy blue, a little stiff hat to match it, with a gray veil drooping behind it, and gray gauntlets. She had exchanged her ankle ties for dainty little boots, and as he had mounted her upon her horse he had not failed to notice her small high-arched instep, the hall-mark of the high-bred Southern woman, which she had to perfection. The force of the breeze, accentuated by their quick motion, had added a deeper color to the richness of her brown cheek. The wind blew her hair hither and thither as they galloped along. She laughed aloud sometimes in the very heedless joy in life. She was so young and so happy. Jerry, the negro groom, in the Annan livery, who rode some distance behind them, if he thought of them at all, would have called them a handsome pair.

Peyton had spent the entire morning at Annandale renewing his acquaintance with the Judge. After luncheon he had begged Mary to ride with him on the Shell Road, then, as now, the driving and riding resort of fashionable Mobile. It was yet so early in the afternoon, however, that they had the road to themselves. Mary Annan was more the mistress of the situation on horseback than she had been on the live-oak, and when Peyton had attempted to continue the conversation in the strain of the morning, she had burst away from him with a dash of speed which challenged his horsemanship and which presently settled into a long swinging gallop, side by side, which carried them over the road at a great pace.

Peyton was as full of satisfaction as anything short

of her complete acceptance of him could have made him. He loved her, he had told her so in spite of his promise, and she had listened at last in spite of her refusal, and had half responded. He was determined to win her and she had given him hope. It was enough to make any man happy. The added exhilaration of the rapid gallop completed his joy. All too soon they drew rein at Frederic's Inn at the end of the made road.

Far to the front of them the unpaved road, abruptly degenerating into a mere bridle path, wound through the woods and lost itself in the distance among the trees.

"Let us alight from the horses and go out on the wharf yonder," said Peyton, pointing off to the left where a long wharf on piles extended far out over the water.

"I think I should like it," replied the girl; "I am a little tired after our rapid gallop."

He sprang down from his horse instantly, stretched up his arms and lifted her lightly from the saddle so soon as her permission was given; and again she noticed that the strength with which he lifted her belied his slender, somewhat delicate appearance. Leaving the horses to the care of the negro he helped her down the steps and they walked slowly out to the end of the wharf.

"I know not which is the more beautiful," said the girl, as they paused at the boat-landing. "Look at the road. Is there another such on the continent? I love those great live-oaks, green still although it is

winter, and all the vivid rich color of those huge broad-leaved magnolia-trees."

She stretched out her arms to the picturesque shore as if she would clasp it in loving embrace.

"Yes," answered Peyton, smiling approvingly at her enthusiasm, "and what makes the oaks more beautiful is the long gray festoons of that Spanish moss hanging from every limb, and the mistletoe clustered around the tops. Even the white China berries and the red yupons and those little bayonet palms add to the charm. But beauty is upon this side, too," he added, sweeping his arm seaward, jealous for his chosen element. "I never expected to be a sailor."

"No," said the girl, "you should have been a poet."

The words cut him a little, but he knew that she meant nothing by it.

"Yes, perhaps; but since I am a sailor, I am glad. There is no touch of verdant nature on the sea, but it has a freshness and a life of its own; and the waves, see how they splash! In their light and airy play they remind me of you."

"Does everything remind you of me, I wonder?" turning to look at him.

"Everything that is beautiful," he answered promptly. For the life of her she could not but be pleased with such exquisite love-making, and, smiling, she showed her pleasure. "To me," he continued, "you stand for everything that is lovely, not only beauty, grace, charm, but the crown of womanhood besides. You are so pure and sweet—in your soul, I mean. In my sight you are purity itself,

purer than the snow upon the mountain upon which not even the wing of the eagle has ever cast a shadow, and you are as far above me as that same crest."

He was dreaming of her again and reading his dreams aloud, and, as before, she listened eagerly.

"Speak to me, dearest," he said at last, as if just awakened; "I love to hear you speak.

> Ah, with laughing water mingle
> The love-song of your choice;
> 'Twill be but shadowed echo
> To the music of your voice.

It enchants me. I'd rather hear it than——"

"That's a perfectly lovely verse, Boyd," she interrupted. "Who wrote it?"

"I did. 'A poor thing, but my own,'" he quoted softly; "you said I was a poet. I've written reams of verses about you, but they do not satisfy me; nothing I could say would measure up to my standard of devotion to you. I feel humble before you, unworthy of you. Yet I aspire beyond merit, or desert, because I love you."

"No, no, you exalt me too much," cried the girl. "I am nothing that you say. I am not at all what you think me. I am nothing but an ordinary Southern girl who——"

"Who is the queen of my heart forever," he interrupted, taking her hand. "No, don't draw it away," he continued; "let me have this hour for my own. Something tells me that I shall not have many."

It was useless, wrong, foolish, yet she let him retain the hand for a little space, soon to be terminated.

"What's that?" she said slowly, at last, drawing away her hand as her eyes turned from him and for a brief space searched the shore.

"Where?" disappointment speaking in his voice.

"There! Coming along the road toward Frederic's! A horseman! See, he is waving to us! Now I recognize him. I'd know that gray horse among a thousand. It's Mr. Bob Darrow. He's shouting something. He has a message for us evidently. What can it be? Some word from father, perhaps. Come, let us go to meet him."

She was half glad, half sorry, for the interruption. It was becoming more and more difficult to keep her lover within those agreeable bounds which her mind, if not her heart, indicated as properly restrained. She liked to hear him, but she had an uneasy feeling that things could not go on for long as they were. She must respond in some way soon. And she was ready neither to dismiss nor to accept him then. Like many another woman, she wanted time. Gathering her skirts in her hand, she ran along the wharf, tripped up the stairs, and reached her own horse just as Darrow reined in his gray.

He had ridden as if pursued. His horse was quivering with excitement and flecked with foam. As he was jerked back on his haunches by his rider's powerful hand Darrow sprang to the ground, tore his hat from his head with his gauntleted hand, and cried out his message. His eyes were shining, his fair face was

crimson with color. His voice trembled with the heavy purport of his tidings.

"I went to your house, Miss Mary," he cried, "they told me that you had come riding here. How are you, Peyton? Glad to see you back. You came in the nick of time, old fellow," he continued, clasping the other's outstretched hand. It was the first time the friends had met for years, but Darrow had time for no other greeting. "I knew you would be crazy to hear the news, Miss Mary," he added, turning once more to the girl, "so I saddled the gray here and rode like one possessed to find you and tell you."

"What is the news, Mr. Darrow?" asked the girl eagerly.

"South Carolina has gone out of the Union. The ordinance of secession was passed at Charleston at one o'clock to-day. This is the beginning of the Southern Republic," he cried exultingly.

He waved his hat in the air and made the live-oaks ring with a mighty cheer, in which the shriller voice of the girl triumphantly joined.

CHAPTER VII

THE WOMAN BETWEEN

PEYTON stood looking at the pair in dazed surprise. The news so startling, which his companions received with such demonstrations of joy, was appalling to him. He did not know what to make of it. Mary Annan had noticed his silence, but she made no comment on it, and indeed Darrow gave them no time for reflection, for as he recovered himself a little he continued his story excitedly.

"The whole town is in a ferment."

"Are they going to do anything?" asked the girl.

"I think so. Telegrams were coming down from Montgomery in a perfect stream when I left. I suppose there will be a parade or salute, or something of that sort."

"Well, let us ride back at once," said the girl. "I am so excited I can hardly breathe. I would not miss it for anything. Isn't it splendid! Jerry," she continued, turning to the groom, "my horse."

As the negro, who had watched the scene with unmoved gravity, little comprehending its ultimate meaning to him and his race, led forward the horse,

both young men sprang to assist her to mount. She looked from one outstretched hand to the other, and turning to Peyton put her little foot in his palm. He flashed a look of gratitude toward her as he lifted her into the saddle; but his joy was not allowed free course, for, with an instinct of kindness which is sometimes mistaken for coquetry, she turned to Darrow, whose face was flushed with disappointment, and said, "I came with Mr. Peyton, you know," which simple remark did a great deal to dim the brightness of Peyton's satisfaction and diminish the poignancy of Darrow's regret.

Both men sprang to their saddles then, and both instinctively made for the right side of the girl, and for a moment it looked as if there might be a collision; but Darrow recovered himself quickly and reined in his horse.

"The place of honor is yours, Boyd. You are Miss Mary's escort this morning, so go ahead. Besides, you are a stranger, too. I surrender the privilege."

"That's handsome of you, old fellow," returned his friend, smiling, as Darrow wheeled around to the left side of Mary Annan.

"If you have finished your discussion, gentlemen," she said, smiling in spite of herself with pleasure at the jealous little rivalry, "let us ride on. I cannot wait to be there."

She shook the reins over the horse's neck, touched him lightly with the whip she carried, and he broke into a long, swinging gallop, an example, of course, followed by the other two. They fairly raced along

the road at a pace which made connected conversation impossible. They covered the distance very rapidly without break or stop until they reached the outskirts of the town. As they turned into Emmanuel Street, Mary Annan reined in her panting horse and cantered slowly down the street.

"My!" she said, with cheerful gladness, "that was a splendid dash! I do not believe we were more than half an hour doing the distance. Your gray looks tired, Mr. Darrow."

"Yes," said Darrow, patting his horse, "you see he has had a double run."

"What time is it?" she continued, turning to Peyton.

"About half after two, I think," he replied, as he took out his watch and glanced at it. "Yes, just. Five bells, a sailor would say."

"Shall we be in time?"

"Oh, I think so," answered Darrow. "Hark! What's that! It's the band!"

"Come," said the girl impatiently, urging her horse into a gallop again, "let's hurry on."

"I think we can intercept them on Government Street if we keep straight on," said Darrow, as he and Peyton followed her example.

"What will it be, do you think?" she cried.

"Oh, a parade, or a salute, perhaps both."

In a short time they reached the junction of Emmanuel and Government Streets. The broad, splendid road, lined with magnificent old houses embowered in trees, was filled with people. Some squares away to

the left came the band of music, followed by marching bodies of gayly uniformed men. The sunlight sparkling on steel bayonets told the trio that they were the soldiers. They were accompanied as usual by throngs of people, and the street was rapidly filling up. Boys and girls, black and white, capered in the street in time to the music.

"What's that they are playing?" asked Peyton curiously.

"It's a new song," answered Mary, " 'Listen to the Mocking Bird,' it's called. I will sing it for you the next time you are at the house."

"Yes, we have all enjoyed hearing you sing it, Miss Mary," put in Darrow deftly, quite nullifying the pleasure Peyton had taken in the promise.

Darrow was a magnificent horseman. He seemed a part of his steed. No centaur could have ridden more superbly. Six feet high, splendidly proportioned, he made a grand picture sitting his great gray horse. No one could be in greater contrast to Peyton than he. His eyes were blue, his hair sunny, his complexion florid, an unusual but not impossible type for a Southerner. Physically he was the incarnation of force and strength, both tempered by Southern courtesy and refinement. He was the personification of headlong recklessness and valor. Fear was absolutely left out of his personality. No one had ever seen him blench, or quail, or tremble. Gay, joyous, debonair, he was a man calculated not only to win the heart of almost any woman, but awaken the admiration of men as well.

Yet there was something lacking about him. In the hidden depths of his nature in which a man shows what he is fundamentally he was not quite so admirable. A touch of soul was wanting in him. The spiritual side of his nature had suffered at the expense of the material. In that particular he was also of a type antipodal to Peyton, for Peyton's physical nature had suffered at the expense of his spiritual. The one needed sorrow and trouble and love—are they synonyms?—to refine him; the other required work and danger and disappointment and love—are they synonyms, too?—to blunt him, as it were, and make him practical and practicable in this workaday world. A crisis would make or unmake each man.

Singularly enough, the girl who sat between the two men, glancing from one to the other, as she marked them both during the dash on the Shell Road, was to furnish the element which should perfect and supply the lack in the character of the two who loved her so. She had spoken but little during their wild riding, but her thoughts had been the more busy on that account. While they, with masculine directness stared at her, she, with a woman's delicate capacity for concealment, was furtively inspecting them. She would not have been a woman had she not admired the splendid physical vigor of Darrow. He always appealed powerfully to one side of her nature, sometimes almost irresistibly so. Yet in her deeper soul there was something that responded with equal, nay, greater force, to the spiritual appeal made by her more refined and less material companion. It must not be con-

cluded that either man entirely lacked the qualities with which the other was so abundantly dowered; not at all, and perhaps the difference between them seemed greater when attention was called to it than it really was, but the two tendencies existed.

Darrow, like Peyton, was deeply in love with Mary Annan. He had paid court to many women after the chivalrous practice of the deferential Southern gentleman, but no one had ever stirred him to such depths of feeling as this exquisite girl. His soul was trembling in the balance under her hand. A touch might call it forth. His voice softened in her presence. A little bit of the audacity and boldness of his splendid bearing was subdued when she was near. The girl made him more gentle, more tender, a nobler man. Her personality laid a hand upon him which almost seemed to say to his soul, "Ephphatha, Be Opened!" Singular to say the same touch upon Peyton produced the contrary effect. His love for Mary Annan, and her character as he saw it, as he idealized it, to some extent—and love is not love when it fails to idealize the object of affection — stiffened his arm, and strengthened his heart and made him resolve to do more than dream of noble things for her. It brought out his innate strength and virility. It armored him in masculine steel.

The focal point in life for man is woman. Well is she styled "the complement of man." Without her he would be nothing. The distinction of sex is the great physical fact upon which the world depends, and in the altruism of woman is found the basis of re-

ligion. The Son of Man Himself was born of a woman. Short-sighted humanity sometimes describes hers as the weaker sex! Here was a young, unformed, undeveloped woman, scarcely more than a girl as yet, and the characters of two men in touch with her were being evolved by her influence, her personality.

There is something of the poet in every lover. In Mary Annan's presence the spiritual was bourgeoning in Darrow's heart. And there is something else, which, for lack of a better term, may be described as the material, in every lover's purpose. There is something virile and active in every great passion—else it is not great—and this was moving in Peyton's mind.

The girl comprehended the case of her two lovers but dimly. She partially discerned it in both instances by a sort of instinct which she could neither analyze nor understand. Yet there was something exhilarating in the situation. It was only play to her as yet, but the play was with edged tools and hot coals, and the excitement of it was superb. When she herself came to comprehend by introspection the power of either passion, and came under the influence of the one or the other, the play would cease to be play. It would be life or death. Life to one, death to the other. What for her?

As she sat between them she inclined now to the right, now to the left, and knew not whither she would finally tend. No one else knew it either, and as the young men measured each other mentally and out-

wardly, they were, while equally resolute, equally undetermined. Not gifted with such instinct as the girl, one at least not given to unconscious analysis, they saw in each other only rivals. Yet each was generous enough to admire in the other the quality or qualities he himself lacked.

Peyton would have given anything for a measure of Darrow's splendid magnetic, magnificent personality; and Darrow humbly wished that some of the delicate perception and fine high spirit of the other man had fallen to his lot. Each was in a fair way of amendment when he recognized the goodness of his rival's qualities.

The two men had been friends from boyhood. The frank, impulsive nature of the larger man, who was also the older, had fitted in with the quieter, more restrained habit of the younger. They had been to each other as body and soul. They made an ideal combination therefore. One planned, the other executed. Not altogether is the statement true again; but, broadly speaking, it was Peyton's subtle mind and Darrow's powerful personality that worked together. Oftentimes Peyton's ideas were utterly impracticable, equally often Darrow's insight was entirely lacking, yet together they supplemented each other. In a great emergency, if any had ever arisen, the combination would have been ideal and success certain. There never had been a cloud upon their friendship. The only thing that breaks friendships like that between man and man is woman. They had been too young, and too much separated in their later life, for

that factor to have thrust itself upon their affections, but now it was quite apparent that the inevitable had at last arrived.

With rapid advance the little parade on the street drew nearer to the party on horseback at the corner of Emmanuel Street. There had been no time to assemble the general military force of the several companies, so that only the Mobile Cadets, the crack organization of the community, were in line as escort to the Light Battery. Very handsome the young fellows looked in their gray uniforms faced with black, with their pomponned caps, just the uniform of the famous Seventh New York, by the way. They came tramping gayly down the street, following the band playing the stirring march which, although it was written by a Northern man, was yet essentially Southern in its character, and was already in great favor on the nether side of Mason and Dixon's line. The shrill fifes trilled the refrain almost with the mellifluous madness of the gay bird itself. The people cheered frantically as the Cadets swept by followed by the lumbering guns of the battery.

As Captain Sands, who commanded the battalion, caught sight of Mary Annan and her two companions he shouted a sudden command and instantly the guns of the soldiers dropped from their shoulders into a marching salute, which the girl acknowledged with a graceful bend of the head and a wave of the hand, her face mantling with pleasure at the honor. The company marched under their own flag, and for the first time they paraded through the streets of Mobile with-

out carrying the ensign of the United States. All three spectators noticed the omission.

"See," cried the girl, "they have discarded the United States flag."

"Yes, by heaven," said Darrow, "they have given it up at last!" There was a little touch of awe in his voice. "At last," he continued; "well, I am glad of it, for one," he burst out impulsively. "We will have a new flag of our own now."

Peyton said nothing. He only held himself very straight in the saddle and looked sternly ahead. Again there came upon his face that peculiar tightening which gave a touch of grimness to his usual appearance. The woman alone noticed it.

The artillery had followed the example of the Cadets and had discarded the United States flag also, but on the flank of the battery rode two markers with guidons. There had been no time to substitute any others, and as the markers were necessary for the evolutions of the battery they were perforce carried in the parade. They were little swallow-tailed bannerets, each one, however, bearing the old familiar stars and stripes. As they passed down the street Peyton's right hand instinctively went to his hat. He took it off and holding his arm across his breast laid his hat upon his left shoulder.

CHAPTER VIII

PEYTON SALUTES THE FLAG

"WHAT are you doing, Boyd?" cried Mary Annan, attracted by the movement, turning to him in great surprise.

"Saluting the flag of the United States," answered the young man sternly.

"What! You don't mean—" interrupted Darrow.

"I mean that I am still an officer of the United States Government, and it is my duty to respect the flag," said Peyton decisively.

"He is right," said Darrow impulsively, taking off his own hat in turn. "Maybe it's the last time, but the old flag is still ours. Alabama is not yet out of the Union."

"Not yet," cried Mary Annan, "but it will be, and I but anticipate. I shall not salute it, and I beg you both not to do it either."

"As you will," said Darrow with careless compliance, covering his head again.

But Peyton, disregarding her words and the angry flush on her face, although it cost him much to do so,

stared motionless straight ahead of him and remained uncovered until the guidons had passed well by him. In spite of herself the girl's heart warmed toward him. That touch of sternness well became him. The unusual resolution which sparkled in his eye, in spite of the tremble on his lips, thrilled her, yet womanlike she turned to Darrow.

"Thank you," she said, "you have done what a true son of Alabama should do."

"At your command, Miss Mary," laughed Darrow cheerfully, saluting her in turn. "But, you see, I am not an officer of the United States."

He generously strove to say a good word for poor Peyton.

"No, I am thankful you are not."

"But if I had been I should have——"

"Do not say any more, Mr. Darrow. You are not, and you did not, and that's enough," interrupted the girl proudly.

She allowed her displeasure at Peyton's obstinacy —so she characterized it in her mind—to appear in her voice and manner. It cut him to the heart as, with the keenness of appreciation peculiar to him, he realized it. But for the life of him he could not have failed to salute that passing flag then; no, not even for her. He did not feel happy about his action, however, but he could think of nothing adequate to say. He could not explain further than he had done, and it was with something like despair that he turned to his companions at last. Mary Annan was tapping her boot with her whip, an angry flush upon her beautiful

face. Darrow was staring in great embarrassment from her to Peyton, in alternation.

"Who is that?" cried Darrow, glad to break the annoying pause at last.

He pointed down toward the rear of the procession, which was brought up by a great concourse of men, women, and children, blacks as well as whites.

"Why, I declare, it's Tempe!" exclaimed Mary Annan, in vexation and dismay, pointing to where her little sister, yelling like a young Indian, capered down the street after the procession arm in arm with a very small and very black darky girl. No one would have recognized the demure little maiden of the morning. "The idea of it!" continued her sister. "Will you get her at once?"

Both young men moved forward.

"No, Darrow," said Peyton impulsively, "you may stay with Miss Mary; I will get her. She is displeased with me, not with you," he added, as he sprang from his horse and ran after the crowd.

"Don't be too hard on him, Miss Mary," said Darrow; "this is no fault of his. He has not yet caught our point of view. I think he will be as true as steel when the hour comes."

"He does not need any support in my presence, Mr. Darrow," said Mary, with unkind coldness. "I know he will be as true as steel, too, but I wish he hadn't saluted that flag."

"I did it too, you remember," he persisted, wistfu to help his friend in spite of her rebuff of his first effort.

"Yes, but you stopped when I said not."

"Ah, Miss Mary, you know there is nothing I would not stop for you."

She wondered with dismay if he were about to continue the story she had heard all day from the other man.

Meantime Peyton forced his way through the crowd with some difficulty and finally caught Tempe in his arms.

"Lemme go!" she cried shrilly. "I want to go with Peggy."

"Where do you want to go?" asked Peyton, lifting her up.

"I want to go to see the soldiers shoot the Nunited States."

"Even the little children," thought Peyton swiftly, as he firmly carried Tempe to the rear in spite of her protestations, "are filled with the idea. Good God, what's going to happen? You won't see the soldiers shoot the 'Nunited States,' Tempe," he said aloud, as he carried her across the street. "Miss Mary wants you. She told me to fetch you to her."

"Do you have to mind sister Mary, too, Mr. Peyton?" queried the child, looking up at him with interested curiosity shining in her black eyes.

"Everybody has to mind Miss Mary," gravely.

"Yes, I s'pose so," said Tempe, resigning herself to his will. "Well, you can take me over to her. I s'pose you are afraid of being a goat if you don't mind her."

"How's that? A goat!" amazedly.

"Yes, a goat. Sister Mary says if you are a bad little girl an' don't mind, when you go to heaven you'll be a little goat."

"I don't understand."

"Sister Mary will 'splain it when you get over to her," said the small child, and as the two stepped before her older sister, she burst out, "Didn't you say if I was a bad girl, an' went to heaven I'd be a little goat, sister Mary?"

"What?" cried the girl.

"An' I told Mr. Peyton if he didn't mind you he'd be a little goat, too, an' he will, won't he?"

"What does the child mean?" asked Peyton.

"She refers to the parable of the sheep and the goats, you know," laughed Mary, "she has it mixed a little, that's all."

Alas, Tempe's theology was often mixed, in which case, however, she was not worse than older and wiser folk. At any rate the strained situation broke up in a general laughter, which was a relief to every one. Tempe had come to the rescue nobly, and as a reward was mounted on the crupper of Peyton's horse, leaving the disconsolate Peggy twisting on alternate legs in the dusty road, and howling vociferously over the separation. The three friends rode down toward the wharf where the battery had unlimbered, and listened to a salute of one hundred guns, which, by the direction of Governor Moore, amid ringing bells, shrilling whistles, and frantic cheering, welcomed the birth of the first State of the new Confederacy.

One wiser than the other two saw in it nothing of

happy promise. He seemed to feel that each crashing shot, each joyous peal, each enthusiastic cheer, was another note in the death-knell of the old beloved South, which in the pride of its manhood and the beauty of its womanhood, as well as in the person of its slaves, watched and participated in the scene.

It was late in the afternoon when the jubilation was over and the military marched away.

"Just three o'clock," said Mary Annan, glancing at the timepiece on the old town hall; "won't you come to dinner with us to-night? You have just come from the North, and father will be so glad to talk with you, Mr. Peyton. You know you were always a favorite of his."

"Thank you very much, Miss Mary, but I have not seen my own people since morning, and this is my first day home. They will be wondering what has become of me. I will be in to see your father very soon, however."

"You, then, Mr. Darrow?"

"You know how I would like it, Miss Mary, but I think I will ride along with Boyd a little. I have not seen him either for three years, and we have lots of things to talk about. You know our friendship was such a warm one."

"Yes," said Peyton, "it was indeed, and I hope nothing will ever come between us."

"Nothing ever shall," said the other, looking at his friend over Mary Annan's horse, and never realizing what Peyton's quicker mind had taken in, that something had already come between them, something that had come to stay.

CHAPTER IX

RIVALS YET FRIENDS

AS Peyton and Darrow cantered up the road a little silence fell between them, which the older man was the first to break. With characteristic frankness he asked his friend a direct question.

"Boyd," he said quietly, "are you in love with Mary Annan?"

"I am," was the prompt reply.

"Is she in love with you? Forgive me this question, old fellow, but we have never had a secret between us since we have been boys together, and I don't want to begin now. And I am as ready to answer as to ask questions. Is she in love with you?"

"No, I think not—not yet, that is."

In any other man Peyton would have resented such interrogations, but he simply could not be angry with his friend, especially in the face of such open frankness.

"Boyd," said the other impulsively, "I want you to know that if I can help it she never shall be."

"Why do you say that, Darrow?" asked Peyton, in great surprise, yet at once divining the reason.

"I love her myself," resolutely.

"And does she love you?"

"Not yet."

"I repeat your words, Bob," cried Peyton, stopping his horse suddenly. "If I can help it she never shall."

"Good!" said Darrow, smiling infectiously at the stern face of the other man, " that is as it should be. A fair field and no favor, and may the better man win! Come, Boyd, don't look so glum about it. We both have an equal chance. She is promised to neither of us. If anything, you have the advantage. But that's all right. I mean to win her for my wife if I can, and you for yours. What I wanted to say to you is this. You won't let this make any difference in our friendship, will you?"

As he spoke he extended his hand to his friend frankly and generously, almost pleadingly. After a momentary hesitation Peyton accepted the proffered clasp, and the two men shook hands warmly over this strange compact, a compact utterly impossible of fulfilment. Both of them were too inexperienced to realize that yet, and the rivalry was too new and too sudden, and the lady too undetermined, to have awakened the latent possibilities, nay, certainties, of antagonism in the situation.

"I won't take any advantage of you," said Darrow magnanimously, "and you won't take any of me, I know."

"No, certainly not, and I am quite prepared to concede that you are the better man of the two, Bob."

"I am not willing to admit that at all, but whether you are the better or not I am going to do my level best in an honorable way to win, Boyd."

"I shall do the same."

"All right. Now, we have settled that. Whew! It's a load off my mind, I am sure. You see I want Miss Mary and I want you too, Peyton. I want her love and I want your friendship as well. I want everybody's, and I suppose you feel much the same way."

"Well, I'm not so particular about everybody's," answered the more reserved Peyton, "but I want hers and yours, and we will agree that whoever may win the lady the other man may at least retain the friend."

"That's a bargain. Now, tell me, Peyton, I saw you salute the flag, and 'twas a natural thing for you to do. If I had been alone I probably would not have done it, but I sort of followed your example. You know I have been accustomed to follow your lead in most things—even to falling in love with Miss Mary; for, as a matter of fact, I suppose you did it first?"

"I have loved her ever since I was born," said Peyton quietly.

"Jove!" said the other, "so have I, and as I am the older I have beaten you there. But what I meant to ask you was, how do you stand with reference to this secession question?"

"I am not aware that I am bound to make, or give, a decision yet."

"No, not immediately, perhaps, but you will be very soon. The talk here is all secession. Governor

Moore is in favor of it. The election of delegates to the convention takes place on the twenty-fourth. I was up in Montgomery last week, and the State desires and accepts it, overwhelmingly, unless in the northern tier of counties. Here it's all one way. It's a foregone conclusion that Alabama will follow South Carolina's lead and go out of the Union. It won't be three weeks before the thing will be done."

"I can't believe it."

"It's true, nevertheless. And every son of the old State will have to make a decision one way or the other. Now, what are you going to do?"

"I can't tell yet. I can't believe that the contingency will arise."

"But if it does?"

"When it does I shall have to decide in accordance with my conscience. Could I not still remain an officer of the United States Navy, even if Alabama does secede? I love my profession. I am thoroughly satisfied with it. I do not wish to abandon it. Why could I not still keep on as I am?"

"Because the United States Government will endeavor to prevent secession by force."

"Is it possible?"

"It is certain. We in the South have known it ever since Lincoln was elected. They will deny the right of secession and attempt to enforce their refusal, and as sure as there is a God above us you and every Southern man will have to say whether he will fight for or against the South, God bless her!"

"This is all new to me, Darrow," cried Peyton. "It

comes upon me with great surprise. I never imagined such a thing until to-day. You see we sailors do not get in touch with popular opinion very closely, and I have but recently returned from a long cruise in foreign waters. Now that you say so, I begin to believe that you may be right. There is a spirit of resistance in the North, of compulsion, too, I think, or there will be."

"I am glad of it," said the other, "I did not think they had spirit to do anything. A nation of shopkeepers," he went on with lofty scorn, "they will cut a pretty figure down here, won't they? I met a man from Arkansas the other day, and he said that if Abe Lincoln's soldiers set foot upon the sacred soil of Arkansas they would fatten the catfish from the Red River to the Gulf of Mexico with their carcasses."

Darrow laughed harshly as he told the tale.

"Ugh!" said Peyton, shrinking from the brutality of the remark, "how beastly that is!"

"Yes, isn't it? I wouldn't have said it, of course. I don't indorse it at all; no gentleman could. But it shows the spirit of the people."

"Arkansas isn't Alabama, though."

"It's much the same thing. We'll make it interesting for the North if they'll fight."

"Darrow," said Peyton earnestly, "don't be deceived. There is as good fighting blood north of the Potomac as south of it. At the Academy we had cadets from every section of the country. I have been well thrashed by Northern men, and I have made it interesting for some others, and I want to tell you,

in victory or defeat, you will find in the North foemen worthy of anybody's steel."

"I hope so," answered Darrow composedly. "Most of our people expect an easy conquest. I would like to win out after a struggle that would be worth while."

"I do not believe there is going to be any struggle, but if there is you will know right away that you are in for a hard fight."

"Well, the harder the better," cried the other, throwing his arm out in a bold, free gesture, full of menace, "the harder the better. But, Peyton, surely you wouldn't hesitate as to what side you would be on? Why, man, see how I love you, when I tell you this. Mary Annan would not look at you a moment if you raised your arm against the South. We need you. You have a fine headpiece on you, old fellow, and you have been trained in the profession of arms. You are a scientific sailor. We want you. Think of the opportunities that are going to open in the new Confederacy for a man of talent and fortune and family and birth and with the prestige of your naval rank! I wish I had it."

"Darrow," said Peyton, turning sharply upon him, "whatever my course may be I shall take it for no other reason than that I think it is right."

"That's right, Boyd, and that will bring you with us, I am sure."

"We shall see," said Peyton grimly, "but here we are at our gate. Won't you come in and take a bite with us? They will be glad to see you."

"No, thank you, old fellow, some other day. I

want to get back to town. I want to be in the thick of things. The town's just filled with excitement. I suppose they will have another jollification to-night. Jove, I love it! I'd rather be in the middle of a fight, I believe, than anywhere else on earth."

"Unless it were with Miss Mary Annan," said Peyton quickly.

"Oh, of course; yet this is treason, I know, but sometimes I half think I'd rather—well, I'll not say it. Good-by. I'll ride out in the morning if you will wait for me, and we will have a long talk about old times, and new times, together."

"All right, I shall expect you. Good-by."

As Darrow wheeled his horse and cantered down the road Peyton sat still in his saddle before the gate and followed him with longing, wistful eyes.

"Poor old Bob," he thought, "it will break his heart if I don't go with the State. What's that he said about Mary Annan? She wouldn't look at me if I fought against the South? Pshaw! He's the dreamer, not I. I can't believe that it will be as serious as all that."

Nevertheless, in spite of his attempt at reassurance, it was with a heavy heart that he rode up the avenue toward the house.

CHAPTER X

PEYTON BEGS FOR TIME TO THINK IT OVER

THE family were just sitting down to dinner, which had been delayed somewhat on account of the exciting events of the afternoon, when Peyton entered the house. There were two vacant places at the table, and he noticed that Willis was absent.

"Sit down just as you are, Boyd," said his mother, as he paused on the threshold of the dining-room; "never mind about your riding clothes. Dinner is just served. We did not wait for you."

"We never wait for anybody," said his father promptly.

"I remember well, sir, that you don't," answered his son, slipping into the chair next his mother.

"Old habit of the army. Punctuality the first duty of a soldier, you know. I expect we shall have to acquire our military habits over again presently—that is, if we have forgotten them."

"Which I am sure you have not, father," said Pink.

"Isn't Willis back yet?" asked Peyton.

"No, not yet, but I reckon he will be along presently," answered the colonel.

"I saw him riding on the caisson of one of the guns in the parade downtown a while ago," continued his son. "I did not know that he belonged to the battery. When did he join?"

"Last month," answered his mother, "just after he was eighteen."

"He looks well, mother, in his soldier clothes."

"Yes, doesn't he?" cried Pink.

"You ought to think so," answered her brother, "he is the living image of you, Pink."

"You have never seen me in a soldier's dress, Boyd."

"No, and I don't want to," said Boyd.

"But if you did," broke in Willis, at that moment entering the room in his natty artillery uniform, "you would see a winner surely! You know Pink and I are just of a size. She's tall, and I'm small, that is, measured by the average, and what fits me would fit her. My uniform is at your service, Miss Peyton, any time you wish it," he continued, dropping into a vacant chair. "Whew!" he cried, wiping his brow, "it was fine! The roaring of the guns almost made me think it was a real battle. That was the first time I ever heard one hundred guns fired. The noise felt good, the powder smelt good, and the cheering was splendid! I enjoyed the whole thing immensely. I suppose it's an old story to you, Boyd."

"Well, no," answered his brother deliberately; "of course I have seen a great deal of powder burned in the service and have shot a good many guns, but

you know we have not had any touch of real war, and I, for one, hope we never shall."

"That's right, my boy," said the colonel, "it is a horrible thing. The Mexican War didn't amount to much, they say, but it was enough to make me wish never to see, much less participate in, another."

"Oh, that's all right, father," interrupted Willis, who had been indulged by everybody until he took liberties with his father which no one else ventured upon, "I have no doubt you are correct, sir, as you always are, but whether we wish it or not there is going to be one, I am sure."

"I fear so," said his father gravely.

"Father, I cannot believe that there will be any trouble," burst out Boyd. "Not that exactly, for I suppose there will be trouble, but I do not believe it will come to open war. Why should it? I don't see that the election of Lincoln makes any material difference to you—to us—in the South."

"You don't!" roared his father, shaking his leonine head at his son. "Didn't he say that a republic could not exist half slave and half free? What does that mean?"

"Still, father, that is only a declaration, as he sees it, of a principle."

"You don't endorse it?" cried the colonel.

"I am not discussing my endorsements now, sir," returned his son striving to speak temperately and remain cool. "I only mean that a statement of a principle doesn't necessarily carry with it the threat of enforcement, or even a demand that it should be put

into effect. We are confronting a theory, you know."

"My lad," returned the father more quietly, "South Carolina's action has turned it into a condition. I hope there will be no fighting, but I fear there will be. I don't hold, as many Southern men do, that the Yankees won't fight. I have seen some of them fight in the Mexican campaign. I know there is good stuff in them. Not that I compare them for a moment with our Southern chivalry, but if they get waked up to it they will fight."

"Indeed they will, father, and they will fight hard, too."

"The harder the better," said Willis recklessly, "and the sooner the better, too. Hurrah for the South, say I! We'll make a new republic with the corner stone that the black man is to be forever and forever a slave. That's logical," he added, under his breath; fortunately no one heard the last phrase.

"Well, the decision is not yet upon us, father," urged Boyd.

"No, but it will be. If I know the temper of our people they will be quick to follow South Carolina's lead."

"Do you think so, sir?"

"I do indeed. From Virginia——"

"You don't think that Virginia will secede, father?"

"What!" cried Mrs. Peyton, joining in the discussion with great animation, "do you think my old State would refrain from joining her sister States? Never! I, for one, would renounce her if she did!"

The gentle Southern matron's eyes flashed fire as she spoke, and the sudden manifestation of intense feeling coming from his gentle mother astonished the young officer more than anything that had been said.

"You will find, Boyd," said his sister, noting his surprised look, "that the women are as determined as the men."

"More so, I really believe," said her twin brother promptly.

"I believe you," Boyd assented. "Why, when I picked up little Tempe Annan out of the crowd near the wharf she screamed and fought me like a little wild cat, saying she wanted to shoot the 'Nunited States.' "

"Good for the child! She has the right spirit," laughed Willis.

"Willis," said his father reprovingly, "I wish you would look on the matter in a different light. It is a very serious thing for us who have fought under the United States flag to turn against it."

"Yes, sir," said Willis, abashed for once in his life, at his father's stern admonition.

"I suppose you will find it so, Boyd," continued the colonel. "You are fresher in the service than I."

"Yes," answered the other gravely, "I think I should find it very hard indeed."

"Boyd, you don't mean—" cried his sister fearfully.

"I don't mean anything now, Pink," interrupted the young man hastily, "it is a subject that a man would have to think over."

"My son, my son," exclaimed his mother, "you

don't mean to tell me that you would hesitate as to where your duty lay?"

"Mother, is a man's duty always so plain to him that he can discern it without a moment's reflection?"

"Good God, sir!" cried his father, springing to his feet and putting his fist heavily down upon the table, and in his excitement forgetful of the presence of anyone but his son—a high index to the depths of his feeling indeed—"do you mean to tell me that a son of mine can hesitate between Abe Lincoln's cause and that of his own State? Why, sir——"

"Father," cried Boyd desperately, turning very pale, as he saw the issue being forced upon him, "don't, I beg of you, speak so to me now! I have not decided anything. I swear to you my mind has never been made up. This has all come upon me so suddenly. I never dreamed of such a thing. It's a shock. Give me time to accustom myself to it. I want to think it over."

"Think it over, sir?" cried the colonel wrathfully.

"Stop, Colonel Peyton!" said his wife quickly, "the boy is right. Give him time. He has not been in the thick of this for months, as we have for years even."

"You said yourself, sir," interrupted Willis, "that it was a hard thing to turn your back against the flag under which you had fought."

"I am sure Boyd will come around all right," said Pink nervously. "Mary Annan will persuade him."

"Thank you, mother, Willis, Pink, all. I shall try to do right, but I would not be your son, father, if I

did not think this over. My adherence would not be worth anything if I gave it lightly. I must have time. Give me a little time, father. No, don't look at me in that stern and forbidding way, sir. I only ask for a breathing space."

"By Jove, my son, you shall have it! Perhaps I was harsh at the moment. I really forgot the circumstances a bit. We will talk it over at our leisure. The whole subject shall be examined, and then I know what you will do. What, Alabama call upon her sons and the Peytons not in the front rank! Never!"

"Yes, Boyd, dear, and if the Peyton part of you doesn't respond I am sure that no child of my family would ever be found wanting at the call of duty; you are a Boyd, too, remember," urged his mother.

"I sha'n't forget it, I am sure, mother," cried Boyd, turning to her gratefully. "Thank you, father. I think I will go to my room now. I have some letters to write, and I want a little quiet thought to myself."

"Did you see Mary Annan, my son?" asked his mother.

"Yes, mother."

"Was she—is she——"

"She is very kind, mother," answered Boyd, his face flushing painfully. He shrank from these public discussion of his love-affair, but there seemed to be no help for it. "She doesn't love me. She doesn't love anybody yet."

"She will, I am sure, when she knows you better," said his mother, patting his hand tenderly.

"I hope so."

"She won't, though," interrupted Pink, "unless you are on the side of the South."

"Well, that is where he will be, of course," said his father.

As Peyton walked out of the room with his heart heavy at the contingencies before him, and closed the door, he heard Willis remark:

"What he says is all right, father, and if I know him he'll never be false to his idea of duty; but the trouble is, what is his idea of duty? That's the point of the argument."

Willis was unusually shrewd for a boy of his years.

CHAPTER XI

PROBLEMS TO BE FACED

PEYTON went to his room with his mind in a perfect turmoil. Mary Annan, South Carolina's act of secession, Darrow's blunt declaration of rivalry, the United States flag, and the proposed Southern Confederacy were mixed together in hopeless confusion. His dreaming days were over. He sat down alone, to face seriously the great problem of life, which came to him in the contrary appeals of love and duty. Alas, that these should be so often, so invariably, at odds! What was he to do? What was his duty, by the way? At present he could not say. Love, duty—which? He could not consider one subject apart from the other, yet the two things appeared to be entirely unrelated—they generally are.

On the other hand, the perturbation of Peyton's family was scarcely less intense than his own. The colonel was a man who, in the smaller matters of life, was absolutely ruled by his wife. But when an emergency arose he was as hard and determined as iron. Fortunately for their domestic peace, he and

his wife were in entire accord on the questions agitating the South, slavery and secession.

The mind of Mrs. Peyton had been profoundly stirred by the John Brown—Harper's Ferry incident in Virginia, and, as was often the case, she had grown as bitter and determined as her husband. She saw that if Boyd elected to hold his commission the result of his decision would be a family quarrel of intense bitterness, and she realized that if he went North he would cut himself off entirely from family recognition. She shuddered to think of the situation resulting then.

Pink was as rabid a secessionist as Mary Annan. The younger the woman the more violent the feeling, seemed to be the rule in that day. The only one who really looked at the matter with more or less indifference was Willis. His own course was perfectly clear to him, but he had inherited a strain of cool shrewdness from some far-away ancestor, and he realized the matter better even than his father. Besides, being the youngest and least important of the family, he counted but for little.

The possibility that his son would not at once tender his services to Alabama was frightful for the old colonel to contemplate. The idea of hesitation, even, was sufficiently appalling to fill his mind with anxiety and sorrow. As he considered the subject of Boyd's probable course he came to an iron resolution in case there should be any failure on the young man's part to do what his father expected of him. He would wait. He would give him time. He would use what skill

and forbearance he could, ply him with every argument that occurred to him, to convince his son and win him to the right course, but in the end—

The colonel was a fair man according to his lights. He admitted that there was some justice in his son's position. It was a new thing to the young sailor, this approaching crisis, although an old story by this time to the colonel and his friends. He hoped and prayed that it would come all right. Yes, he really prayed. He was a God-fearing man, in his way, and he poured his soul out in earnest petition to his Maker that his son might see with his eyes and walk in his path—in the way he firmly and confidently believed to be not merely the right but the only way, as well. In those petitions his wife joined. It shows the strength of their convictions, the certainty of their conclusions, that neither thought to pray for light to direct them in their own course in the crisis. What that should be they were well assured, and neither hesitated nor doubted for a moment. They would go with the South and Alabama to the last vestige of their being. What need to pray about that? In the sincerity of their belief that was the only possible course for them, for any Southern man or woman.

Mary Annan and Bob Darrow, too, had their moments of serious thought. The girl sat alone in her room after dinner that evening and considered the situation. She knew not whether to admire the more Darrow's ready compliance with her request not to salute the flag or Peyton's unbending resolution to do it. She knew not whether she liked the one bet-

ter than the other or whether she held them both equally lightly. Of one thing she was very certain. She would never give her heart and hand, under any circumstances, or for any reason, to any man who was not heart and soul for the South and secession.

How handsome Bob Darrow was, her thoughts ran on. What a splendid soldier he would make. The South was filled with such men. Where was there another country, or nation, which could produce such? Where was the army that could stand against such as they? Knight and gentleman, typical of the chivalry of the land she loved. No, she could never love any man whose heart and soul were not with the South, certainly not Peyton.

"I am afraid," she murmured at last, "that Boyd Peyton won't be with us. Yet he could not refuse. There is no traitor blood in him. But—oh, I'm afraid—afraid. Well, aside from the cause I don't care. The South wants only willing advocates."

Why was it then that she put her head down upon her hands as she knelt by her bedside and sobbed and sobbed and sobbed? Ah, strange the mystery that lies within a woman's heart!

As for Darrow he mingled in the thick of the enthusiastic multitude that night. He entered with all the spirit of his nature in the reckless abandon to jollity of the passing moments. But when he was alone, striving to think of Mary Annan, Peyton's face with that tight touch of grimness which he never remembered to have seen before, would obtrude itself. It

had been plain sailing before his return to the scene of action, but now it seemed strangely different.

"I am afraid," he murmured, "that I cannot persuade him. He has been so long in the North that the leaven's got in him. And it is working. Yet, if he goes, that will give me a free field. Oh, but I don't want it that way. I want him for the South, and her for me."

He was a generous, noble-hearted youth, yet in spite of his assertion, his soul leaped at the thought of Peyton's throwing away his chance with Mary Annan, by remaining true to the United States Government.

"If he does," he said at last, "I shall have her anyway. Not all the States and all the men north of Mason and Dixon's line can take her from me."

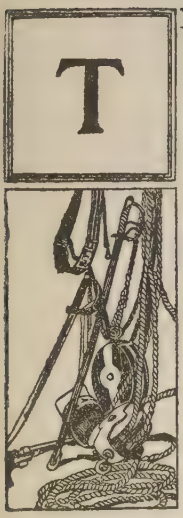
Like most Southerners of that day he underestimated the strength of his antagonists, personal and national. He had realized this dimly in spite of his doughty words, and he was not much happier than the others after all.

BOOK II

THE STORM BREAKS

CHAPTER XII

THE INDECISION OF PEYTON



THE passage of that act of secession in Charleston, South Carolina, marked the beginning of trouble for all the persons concerned in this story. Alas! it marked the beginning of trouble for a great many persons concerned in a great many stories which shall never be told.

Peyton had been entirely honest in his conversation with his father. He had not made up his mind, and in the intervening days he tried hard to do so. Making up his mind finally and definitely upon any subject except Mary Annan had been rather a difficult task to him heretofore. Like many spiritual, sensitive, highly organized natures he lacked initiative and determination, and much preferred to have things happen as they would rather than constrain them. But this was a question which could not be put by.

There were long discussions between father and son concerning the rights and wrongs of the situation. Colonel Peyton was the extremest type of Southern man. He believed that slavery was a divine institution warranted by Biblical teaching, and sanctioned

alike by morality and expediency. Looking upon the negroes as an inferior race, he would hear of no condemnation of the system by which they were held. In his own case his slaves were happy and contented. His ownership and rule were mild and benevolent, and his people adored him. This was the case with most of the slave-owners he knew, and he wilfully, or perhaps unconsciously, blinded himself to any other feature of it.

Aside from any consideration of the slave question, his State was easily paramount to the United States or any other of them in his affections, and he was unable to understand how there could be any hesitation on the part of his son as to his duty. He plied him with every argument at his command, while, by the most violent efforts, he barely succeeded in preserving some measure of his self-control in the daily discussions.

At first Boyd thought to break away from these recurring periods of heated debate and solace himself in the society of the woman he loved. But here again exactly the same state of affairs supervened. If possible Mary Annan was more fierce and determined in her sentiments than his father. She was completely swept away by the situation. He found that whereas she had been willing before to allow him to pour his tale of affection in her listening ears, and had even played at love-making herself, now she had but one topic of conversation, and he was perforce compelled to confine himself to the discussion of that or remain silent. The girl's resolution to think of and talk of

nothing else mastered his futile efforts to substitute other subjects for discussion, especially as his own mind was full of the same topic.

When he was with neither father nor sweetheart and resorted to the society of Darrow and the young men of his old-time acquaintance he found that no other subject for conversation could be started and maintained with them either. In truth, there was reason for all this concentration of mind upon one idea, this social obsession upon secession. As he entered more and more into the spirit of his environment he saw more and more clearly the irreconcilable nature of the opinions held by North and South upon the question of slavery.

The right of a State to secede from the General Government had never been tested. Threats had been freely indulged in from time to time in periods of stress, in moments of exigency, by both Northern and Southern States, John Hancock and Massachusetts leading off, but they had not been seriously regarded hitherto in our national history—except in one instance, possibly—and the action of South Carolina, which was, after all, inevitable, came with the force of a sudden surprise.

Such was the contagion of the idea, however, that nearly every slave-owning State immediately fell in line. Although they perhaps did not realize it, they were all ripe for secession. South Carolina was no more determined than the rest. She had merely anticipated them, that was all. The idea was communicated from man to man in one of those sudden waves

of popular emotion and feeling which abrogated all distinctions, abolished all differences, and united the majority of the people upon the great question. Opposition was drowned by a steadily increasing current of vociferous popular opinion.

There were many like Judge Annan, for instance, who thought secession unnecessary on account of Lincoln's election; who deplored it, fought against it, argued against it with all their powers, but who, it was certain, would eventually accept it with all its consequences, in case, or when, it should be brought about.

The warlike spirit of the South evidenced itself in the upspringing, in every city or village, of new military companies; and the young men who had seen nothing of its horrors, who knew nothing of its miseries by experience, were clamorous for war. The Southerners affected to hold the men of the North in great contempt, but deep down in their secret hearts they expected that they would not be permitted to establish their Southern Confederacy on the corner stone of slavery without strenuous efforts being made by the North to prevent it. It was known to the leaders, without doubt, that the right of secession would be denied and the attempted act would be resisted. War actually began when the wires flashed the news across the continent and around the world that South Carolina had severed the bonds that knit her to her sister commonwealths in the great nation known as the United States.

Entertainments of every sort were more or less

given up. The papers were filled with announcements of the new military organizations in which the privilege of enlistment was eagerly sought. Uniforms were seen everywhere upon the streets, and the music of fife and drum stirred the martial ardor of the citizens. In the midst of all the excitement came the election of deputies to the conventions which were held in Alabama and adjoining States with the avowed object of following South Carolina's action in carrying the several States out of the Union. Although vigorous protests were made by some eminent men, like Alexander H. Stephens, of Georgia, the result in every case was a foregone conclusion.

The question of slavery, which, while it was obscured by the question of secession, was really the basic consideration, since it was slavery which brought about the desire for secession, was almost as fiercely debated, but with not nearly so much unanimity. The Southerners were by no means agreed on that subject. And it was a pity that this diversity of opinion was not realized in the North. Here again Judge Annan differed from many of his neighbors. He, in common with such men as Henry A. Wise, the governor of Virginia, deplored the existence of slavery, and with others had been quietly working for some time looking toward its abolition. They had come to regard slavery as a curse and blot upon the fair name of the South, as well as a menace to any industrial supremacy, rather than a divinely ordered institution, a blessing. Left to themselves, these men would have brought about a gradual abolition of slavery upon equitable

grounds, which would have been acceptable to the whole nation.

The moral consciousness of the South, generally speaking, was entirely at rest on the question, however. The slaveholding statesmen were as sincere and as thoroughly convinced that they were right as the most violent abolitionist was to the contrary, and to convince them otherwise would require time, tact, and patience, forces which have often before moved a world. Such an industrial system as slavery could not be uprooted suddenly without so seriously disturbing existing economic conditions as to produce revolution. The efforts of the Southern abolitionists—who would naturally resent the term—were in the present excitement fruitless. They found themselves hopelessly outclassed, and were compelled to sink the question of slavery in a choice between their State and the United States. Their choice in most instances was inevitable.

Attacked, therefore, by family, friends, and sweetheart, Peyton actually gradually persuaded himself that it was not his duty to remain in the United States service. Yet in spite of every inclination one thing fought against that conclusion. His duty to his country, and a conviction that the bounds of his country were wider than those of any State, that the nation was greater than all of them.

During the most impressionable period of his life he had been removed from the influences which had moulded the characters of those about him. He had been thrown much in the society of a certain Captain

David Farragut, himself a Southern man, a native of the neighboring State of Tennessee, and whose childhood home had been in Louisiana. The impress that had been made on Peyton's developing character while in this formative state by his surroundings and especially by the clear-headed, common sense, sound judgment and lofty patriotism of this elderly naval officer, who had lived a long life in the service with but little opportunity for distinction, was of the very deepest quality. He knew that with Captain Farragut —or to give him his courtesy title, Commodore Farragut—there was nothing above the United States, and that loyalty to the General Government, or as he expressed it, to the flag, was the paramount duty of every officer and sailor.

Still the old captain was far away. The force of his arguments was naturally greatly diminished by distance and absence. Peyton wavered and slowly approached the point of handing in his resignation. Why not? He had been born in Alabama. All his family, his friends, the woman he hoped to make his wife, lived there. All his affections, his dreams, his hopes, were centred there. If war came—and he was at last convinced against his will that it would come, and the conviction came in the end because he was one of the few Southern men who knew the quality of the North, which most of his countrymen, publicly, at least, derided—he would be compelled to fight against those he loved, and who loved him. Living in a seaboard town, it was quite possible that he might some day be compelled to turn the guns of a warship upon

this very city, upon his own people, upon his own home. An awful thought that, a terrible argument.

But there was another powerful incentive. The very moment that he announced his determination to continue in the United States service and his refusal to resign he would be a man marked for hatred and contempt. Whereas he was now courted, flattered, and loved by his friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, then he would be execrated and despised. Should he exchange the approval of this community of friends for the careless approbation of comparative strangers? Should he deliberately abandon the prospect of winning the woman he loved for his wife—and she became more precious to him with every illusive moment of her society she vouchsafed to him—in order that he might continue in the United States service?

Should he follow in the footsteps of his father, honor and preferment awaited him. His military and naval training would be of great value to the South. To the North he would be only one of a number of enterprising young officers.

In short, nearly everything urged him to a decision in conformity with the wishes of his people, and the arguments that were brought to bear upon him were so powerful that they nearly decided him—nearly, but not quite. Again and again it was on his lips to announce that decision, yet something held him back. For the life of him he could not tell exactly what it was, yet he could not contemplate with equanimity a position of opposition to that flag to which he had given himself with the passionate devotion of his nature. Many

men as brave, as true, as devoted as he was, could do that, would do it. Do it with heartaches, do it with anguish, but still do it in accordance with what they felt to be a higher duty. Well, he did not reproach them, but could he do it? Was there a higher duty? That was the question. Like Banquo's issue, it would not down.

He grew haggard and pale under the stress and strain of the outward and inward debate with men, conscience, and the woman. He had time for no day-dreams now. Under the iron pressure in the terrible struggle, which tore the very depths of his being, he began to lose some of the indifference, the hesitation, the timidity, which had characterized him in the presence of the world. He began to stiffen and to strengthen.

Watching him painfully were those who loved him, his father, his mother, his brother and sister, aye, his sweetheart, Mary Annan, for she too began to come within the category. Although she neither knew it nor admitted it, it needed but a touch apparently to reveal to her and to him the depths of affection which she was beginning to entertain for him. That mighty struggle going on within his breast, which she dimly realized from the outward manifestations of it in the change in his character, brought them nearer together. She watched him with perhaps the same feeling of terrified interest with which women of old, otherwise dainty and refined and not devoid of the gentle sympathy we love because we lack it, watched the gladiators in the ancient Roman arena. She sometimes

thought fatuously that she was the guerdon of that struggle, having not yet gone deep enough in her own heart or the heart of the world, to realize that she was but an incident, the most compelling, the most powerful, but, after all, only a circumstance in the conflict raging in his personality.

To do, or not to do, and which was the duty to be done, which to be left undone, for he began to see that, as in every great crisis or question, there were duty calls from both sides of it—that was his problem. Sometimes in her presence he sat in perfect silence for long moments. These periods were not filled with the dreams of old, and when she timidly broke them by asking the subject of his thoughts he would reveal the mighty turmoil by some brief incisive comment which taught her, as nothing else could, the fierceness of the struggle. She prayed, as thousands of others in both North and South did in those trying days, that the decision might be for her and hers, and awaited it with a hope which grew stronger every day.

The moral character of the young man had not greatly developed hitherto, his characteristics were yet more or less negative, because no strain had been brought upon him, it was yet to be determined how he would stand the tremendous pressure. Whether his instinctive sense of loyalty to the flag under which he had been educated, to which he had pledged himself, which he had sworn to defend, would be strong enough to enable him to counter the other pleas or not, he could not tell. But he struggled on.

Bob Darrow, too, grew more unhappy. He made

little progress in his love-affairs, although, so far as he could see, neither did Peyton. Mary Annan was kind to him, too kind. She distributed her favors between the two men impartially. By a tacit agreement they had avoided clashing and dispute about her. Each contrived as he could to see her alone, but when chance brought them together there was no unseemly rivalry. Indeed, the discussions were all upon the one great question. Darrow's position was unequivocal. He was heart and soul for the South, but, strange to say, he was almost the quietest man of the social circle in which the young men moved. The leaven of love and the effect of the great crisis were developing his nature also. Where he had before given his judgment with a laugh and without thought he became reserved and contemplative. Deliberation appeared in his manner, a little hesitancy or reluctance, which, as it appeared to be accompanied by no loss of confidence in any emergency, the girl found very attractive. Indeed, had Peyton been out of the way she certainly would have fallen in love with Darrow. And it might be, before she realized the situation, that something would turn the scales in his favor. So they were all in a state of feverish excitement, and the days passed in alternations of anxiety and elation.

Even little Tempe had a hard time of it, for never in her small life had she found her sister so distrait, so anxious, so quick to reprove a fault, so heedless of her childish ailments and complaints. Christmas came and went without the usual jollity and merrymaking. It was useless to cry "Peace, peace," when there was

no peace but war; futile to urge "good-will toward men," when that, between the two sections, was already a thing of the past. Matters moved rapidly in Alabama, and the crisis came on the night of January 3, 1861. This happened to be the birthday of Mary Annan. Her father, the old Judge, in celebration of it, gave a dinner-party at his home at Annandale, late in the afternoon, to which were bidden several of his oldest and most intimate friends, as well as a few of the younger people, including Darrow and Peyton, and his sister, Miss Pinkie. Willis, much to his disgust, was forced to content himself with an invitation to the dancing-party which was to follow the dinner.

CHAPTER XIII

A DINNER AND A DISCUSSION

ALTHOUGH dinner was served at Annandale House a little after three o'clock in the afternoon in accordance with the invariable Southern custom, the shutters were closed, the blinds were drawn beneath the heavy lambrequins, and the darkened dining room was lighted by numbers of wax candles in old-fashioned gilt candelabra, from whose branching arms depended many glass prisms, which tinkled softly in the vibration caused by the serving of the dinner.

The table was loaded with massive plate which had come down from colonial days and even antecedent years in older countries, and it groaned with that profusion of viands which was characteristic of Southern hospitality.

At the head of the board, opposite Judge Annan, the host, a huge turkey stuffed with chestnuts and done to a turn, reared itself loftily upon its vantage ground of a capacious silver platter which in former days and older countries had often carried the lordly boar's head of the Christmas tide. At the other end of the table, opposite Madam Peyton, who, displacing

Mary to the girl's great relief, played hostess for the occasion, on another charger stood a small fat pig, roasted whole, a bright red apple within its mouth, its brown and crusty sides dotted with specks of clover and pepper, the tiny globules giving forth a spicy aroma as appetizing as it was fragrant. Certainly the princess among cooks was the old Southern mammy—semi-barbaric race bringing forth the natural chef, last product of modern civilization!

These *pièces de résistance* of the menu were flanked by dishes of rice so deftly cooked that each particular kernel preserved its identity in the mass, bowls of candied yams swimming in delicious golden syrup, and other vegetables indigenous to the South. The North contributed the crisp celery, while from ships in the port, golden macaroni was the offering of Italy to the profusion and luxuriance of the board. In tall old decanters wine of rare vintage and rich bouquet stood convenient at every hand. The liveried black servants flitted about deeply attentive to the wants of the guests and zealous in upholding the credit of their beloved master's prodigal hospitality.

On the right hand of her father, as being the guest of honor, to celebrate whose birthday the dinner was given, sat his daughter. Her slender neck and shoulders rose from a perfect billow of flounces of exquisite point lace, which covered the airy tulle fabric of her corsage, the ivory tints of her skin making sweet contrast to the sheer whiteness of her dress. She had striven to control her rebellious curls, and an attempt had been made to part her hair in the middle and draw

it down smoothly around her brows and over her ears, gathering it in the back in a handful of curls in which she had thrust a single belated red rose. But the wave that was in her hair would show itself, and the thick brown locks, resisting control, rippled softly across her temples. She wore no jewels, although her mother's casket in the chamber above was filled with beautiful gems.

Opposite Mary was her friend and companion Pinkie Peyton. Next to Mary, Boyd Peyton was lucky enough to find himself, and opposite him, next to his sister, sat Darrow. On either side of Madam Peyton, at the other end, sat the Hon. Andrew Barry Moore, the governor of Alabama, and Colonel Jones Withers, the mayor of Mobile. The governor, who was an old friend of Judge Annan, had come especially from Montgomery, the State capital, to honor his daughter. The rest of the company—which included Colonel Peyton, the Rev. Dr. George Bampney, the rector of Grace Church; Dr. Lucien Venosste, a retired physician, who owned large cotton plantations up the State, although he lived most of his time in Mobile; Señor Francisco Mendiota, a ship owner, an exporter of tobacco and cotton; Mr. Owen Hudson, a leading lawyer of the city and State, and various other friends of consideration, together with their wives—were suitably placed about the table.

The peculiar cosmopolitan character of Mobile society was well illustrated by the company. Bampney was of English descent, Venosste of French ancestry, Mendiota the son of a former Spanish governor, Hud-

son came of good Massachusetts stock which had strayed South prior to the Revolution. Centuries of colonial history with periods of differing and successive national domination in the land were represented at the table. The Annans, of course, sprang from Scottish forebears. There were touches of Irish in many of the guests, and here and there a hooked eagle-like face was reminiscent of the fierce Mauvila Indian who lorded it over the land before Bienville's day, one hundred and sixty years before. Yet they were all blended into one homogeneous family now, and upon each of them were written the characteristics of the South. They were gentlemen all, men of culture and education, of probity and ability, of honor and station; possessed of high moral sense, honored and respected in the community, and governed by convictions to which they adhered with passionate intensity.

Though they were gathered together in festal guise and to do honor to the daughter of the house, the one subject that would obtrude itself was the one paramount in every heart. By universal consent, the discussion which waxed warm and persistent as the meal was dispatched, irresistibly turned upon the predominant question of secession and its concomitant, slavery.

"Gentlemen," said the governor, a large stout, well-built, rubicund, blue-eyed man, "you know my sentiments, of course. I telegraphed to the governor of South Carolina when the ordinance was being considered, on my own account and in my own behalf, of course, 'Tell the Carolina convention to listen to no compromise or delay.' "

"We indorse everything that you said, Governor," said Colonel Peyton, quickly.

"The State is with you," added Señor Mendiota.

"Our cause is a righteous one, and it will prevail," remarked the Rev. Dr. Bampney.

"Yes, your excellency," said the mayor, a wiry, slender, nervous man, a graduate of West Point, who was to see hard and brilliant service later in the war, "secession will sweep the convention on the seventh, if the spirit of our Mobile people is any criterion. I do not believe there will be a dozen votes cast against it."

"One of that dozen will be mine," firmly interrupted Judge Annan.

"What, Judge!" cried the governor, in surprise, "you are not one of Abe Lincoln's men, are you?"

"No, your excellency, by no means, but I do not yet see the necessity for secession. Abraham Lincoln, much as I dislike the man," said the aristocratic, distinguished gentleman, who was one of the very few in the South who gave the President his full Christian name, "and loth as I am to think that the President of the United States is of such common stock and ordinary breeding, has been legally elected in a constitutional way. I do not apprehend any interference with the rights of the South from him."

"But," said Dr. Venosste, "he has stated that the country cannot exist half slave and half free."

"That doesn't make it a fact, Doctor," said the Judge; "Alabama exists half slave and half free."

"The subjection of the black to the white was so in-

tended, ordained of old," commented the venerable clergyman, sipping his wine.

"As to the question of interference," here interposed Mr. Hudson, "whatever the will of the President might be, he is restrained by our constitutional checks from any overt action."

"True, gentlemen," said the judge, "'and believe me, the liberties of the South are not jeopardized by his election. The action of South Carolina was hasty, unnecessary, impolitic, in the last degree."

This announcement was received in dead silence. There was but one heart that beat responsive to it around that table, young Peyton's. The face of the judge's daughter was filled with pain and shame. The expression on most of the others was surprise. Colonel Peyton with difficulty restrained himself from an explosion.

"What would you advise then, Judge?" asked the governor, one of the most determined advocates of secession in the South. "What would you have us do? Submit tamely?"

"Do nothing, sir. Pursue the even tenor of our way; let any overt action, if there is to be one, come from—shall I say the enemy? Let the North show its hand first. I, for one, should deplore the dissolution of this great Union."

"'Judge," said the mayor, incisively, "you are right in the last phrase. When South Carolina went out of the Union it was thereby immediately dissolved."

"'Tis a fact accomplished," said the clergyman.

"I fear so. Indeed, indeed, I fear so," remarked the

judge, thoughtfully. "But my convictions are as I stated."

"But your course, Judge?" asked Colonel Peyton.

"Colonel and gentlemen," replied Judge Annan, "I trust that my patriotism is above proof. What Alabama does, I do. I am a citizen of the United States, but first and foremost I am a citizen of Alabama. If she goes out of the Union, which God forbid, I go with her. If it breaks my heart I must go with my State."

"Oh, father," whispered his daughter, "I love you for that!"

Boyd Peyton's heart sank into the depths once more.

"Gentlemen," said Colonel Peyton, "if my old friend will permit me, I give you a health. The health of a man who subordinates his private convictions, his individual opinions, to the allegiance due to the State in which he was born. God bless her, that she has produced such sons, and may all here do likewise."

As he spoke he shot a meaning glance at his son where he sat next to Mary Annan. The toast was drunk with enthusiasm by everyone present except young Peyton, who merely touched his lips to his glass after some hesitation with a very moody countenance. In the ordinary course of events, with the termination of the dinner proper the ladies would have retired to the drawing-room while the gentlemen lingered over their wine, but the subject under discussion was of such burning consequence to them all that Madam Peyton, who had assumed the rôle of hostess for the occasion, sat still and gave no signal. The conversa-

tion that passed around the table between the older men had a body of feminine auditors so intensely interested that it was with difficulty that they kept silent.

"I knew, of course," said the governor, suavely, as Colonel Peyton sat down, " that we could count upon you, and indeed, Judge, I think you are wrong. I am sure that an attempt will be made to dispossess us of our slaves summarily, and to force upon us, without time for preparation or resistance, the very choice which we now make, or will make, shortly."

"An irreconcilable difference of economic systems will inevitably produce an irrepressible conflict, which will not cease until one or the other system triumphs. What Lincoln said is true. The country cannot exist half slave, half free. They will resist secession in the North. The conflict is inevitable," said the lawyer, slowly and carefully delivering his weighty words, which made a profound impression upon all by their gravity and accuracy.

"I agree with the governor on the one hand," said Dr. Venosste, a thoughtful old man, beloved by everyone in the town because of his kindly, charitable life, "and I agree with my friend the judge, and Lawyer Hudson, on the other. I do not regard slavery, with all deference to you, reverend sir, as a divine institution. As an economic system, it seems to me to be extravagant and ill adapted to the needs of a community like ours, although I am a slave-owner, as my family have been for generations. I was born and reared amid the institution of slavery; I first learned to whirl the top and bounce the ball with the young

African. Everything I own on earth is the result of slave labor, the bread that feeds my wife and children is produced by the labor of slaves. They live on my plantations with every feeling of kindness, as between master and slave. I love them, they love me. Yet, frankly, I would rather see them free. I should be ready to join and co-operate with any move whatsoever looking to that end. To free them myself out of hand, and without general co-operation among other slaveholders, would be to plunge them into poverty and disaster, but it has been my hope that some means might be devised whereby slave labor could be supplanted by free labor and property holding in slaves might cease to be in the South. So the 'irreconcilable difference' Mr. Hudson speaks of might be—shall I say harmonized?"

"Gentlemen," said the governor, reading from a newspaper clipping which he took from his pocket, "Yesterday in Montgomery, at the session of the Alabama Conference of the Methodist Church, South, it was resolved that the Conference believed 'African slavery as it existed in the South to be a wise, humane, and righteous institution, appointed of God and calculated to promote in the highest possible degree the welfare of the slave; that the election of a sectional President of the United States was evidence of the hostility of the majority of the people to the South, and which, in fact, if not in form, dissolves the compact of Union between the States and drives the aggrieved party to assert its independence;' and they said further, 'Our hearts are with the South, and should

there be need we shall not be found wanting in the hour of danger.' "

"A ringing declaration that," said Dr. Bampney, who was an Episcopalian, "from our Methodist brethren. Pity that men of such clear insight ever left the fold of the true Church."

"It's a question of property again. Almost all political or even moral questions have a material basis. The Northern States, in defiance of the Constitution, have denied that slaves are property, have refused to protect slave-owners, in despite the Fugitive Slave Law, in their title to their slaves, and will refuse," said the lawyer, again clearly stating the case and with his fine legal mind going to the core of the problem in a way that awakened everybody's admiration.

"The right to govern rests in a small minority," said the aristocratic Mendiota, never having shaken off the autocratic heredity of his Spanish ancestry, the most persistent blood in Europe, "the duty to obey is inherent in the great mass of mankind. The real civilization of a country is in its aristocracy. We can have no aristocracy in the South without slave labor, and if we cannot have slaves without secession, let us secede."

"Gentlemen," said the judge, passing over the remarks of the last speaker as unworthy of refutation, "I think Dr. Venosste is right. I have held similar opinions, and yet one circumstance has convinced me at least of the futility of any present hope of a peaceable, orderly abrogation of slavery. It has not impaired my conclusions or blinded my judgment, I trust,

but I am aware that it has done more to deter men who think as Dr. Venosste and myself—and there are many of us—from any concerted action, than anything that could have been done."

"What was that, Judge?" asked Colonel Peyton.

"The conduct of the North with regard to the John Brown raid."

"Yes, yes," cried the colonel, "what did the Northern sympathizers think of that? Here was a bloodthirsty fanatic, who struck against the sovereign State of Virginia, and through her against the United States," he continued fiercely, with a singular perversion of the relative importance of the sovereign bodies. "Here was a man who levied war upon a constitutional commonwealth and upon a confederation of commonwealths; who seized a government arsenal, shot or imprisoned unoffending citizens, and did it all with the avowed purpose of exciting a servile insurrection; who cherished the monstrous design of arming the slaves, of letting them loose upon our wives and children—think of it, in the presence of the grace and beauty around this board, gentlemen!—of turning these men into fiends with his impracticable dreams of liberty and freedom, and precipitating upon the country horrors unspeakable!"

"Yes," said the judge, more calmly, "you are right. When he was apprehended by the gallant Lee of Virginia——"

"Gentlemen, you will hear more of that man when war comes," interrupted the mayor. "I knew him at West Point."

"When he was apprehended and tried and convicted of high treason by due process of law," continued the judge, "every opportunity being afforded him for defence, before an impartial jury of his countrymen, and when he was executed in a dignified and orderly manner, without execration or obloquy, in vindication of the law, what then? Gentlemen, you are aware that churches all over the North held services of humiliation and prayer—that Brown was glorified as a saint. Minute guns were fired. In the Legislature of the great State of Massachusetts eight out of the nineteen senators voted to adjourn at the time of the execution. Women canonized the bloodthirsty old fanatic as St. John the Just. Philanthropists pronounced him most truly Christian. Northern poets, like Whittier, Emerson, and Longfellow, wrote panegyrics upon him. Orators, like Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison, approved his action, and counted him a martyr. Why, it was proved that Christian ministers——"

"I blush for them!" interrupted Dr. Bampney, hotly; "I repudiate them!"

"—had been party to his scheme of assassination and robbery."

"Shame! Shame!" broke from one man and another as the judge's voice rose in stern denunciation.

"That opened my eyes, gentlemen, as nothing else could have done," said the old man, slowly; "that paralyzed all the efforts we had been quietly making looking toward the manumission of the slaves."

"But, Judge, after that, can you doubt that war will come?" asked the mayor, quickly.

"I do not know what to say as to that," answered the judge. "It may come in God's providence. Perhaps it will come. I fear so, but, frankly, I have not changed my mind upon secession. The Union is ours. We are a part of it. Think of the moral advantage we have by claiming and retaining it! Let those who dislike our system leave us. Let us not go out."

"Judge," said the governor, "your ideas are impracticable. If the war must come—and I, for one, am sure it will—we must not wait until the fourth of March. Forewarned, we must be forearmed. Rather than submit for one moment to black Republican rule, I would have our people fight to the last drop of blood to resist this fanatical oppression. We can only guarantee our safety by the strength of our arms."

"Are we sure of the success of those arms? I speak not in doubt, but seek assurance from the soldiers present," asked the judge quickly.

"Perfectly sure," replied Withers, confidently. "Don't you think so, Colonel Peyton?"

"Not a doubt of it, sir! The Yankees won't stand a ghost of a show with the South," answered the colonel, with equally confident assurance.

"And if the valor of our citizens were not enough," interposed Dr. Venosste, "we have another ally."

"And that is?" asked Dr. Bampney.

"Cotton, sir! Cotton is king. We control the cotton product of the world. England and France, Europe, must be with us on that account, if no other."

"Suppose the North tries to blockade our ports, Doctor?" queried Mendiota.

"They could not. The task would be so gigantic as to be impracticable, and the Powers would not permit it. They must have cotton; they can get it no place but here."

"You are correct, Dr. Venosste," exclaimed the governor; "cotton is king, and we are the power behind its throne. But, aside from that, the fighting power of the South is vastly greater than that of the North, in spite of their advantage in numbers, for here every man is a soldier. I am as sure of success as I am convinced of the power of a State to withdraw from the Union."

"Abstractly no one can deny the right of secession. The Constitution is the act of the several sovereign States; it is their instrument. The instrument could not be construed as binding any unwilling to ratify it, nor as holding any bound who wish to be free. All we wish is to be let alone, to be allowed to depart in peace. Shall we be allowed neither peace in the Union nor the poor boon of seeking it out of the Union?" asked Hudson, incisively.

"You are right, sir," cried Colonel Peyton, "we must organize conventions all over the South, set fire to the Southern heart, instruct the Southern mind, give courage to each other, and at the proper moment, by one organized, concerted action, precipitate the conflict with a first blow, which will give us an advantage."

"No, no; if the war comes let them make it," said the judge.

"And as to secession," continued the governor, "it

is true, as Mr. Hudson says, the Union was made up by the voluntary adhesion thereto of the different commonwealths, and that any State thereof, consistent with the national Constitution, may lawfully and peaceably withdraw from the Union without the consent of the Union or of any State. Let those who shall strive to prevent it look to it at their peril! We have rights and we dare to maintain them! We will fight for them with the last ounce of our treasure and the last drop of our blood. Believe me, when the time comes Alabama will not be found lagging in the rear. Her children, gentlemen," said the governor, rising to his feet, "will be found at the front. We have waited too long. This very day, this very hour, a movement is on foot which will be consummated before the sun rises again, which will assure the world of our meaning."

The men had risen in excitement as the governor made this important announcement, and they burst into wild cheering as he closed. Judge Annan and Dr. Venosste alone preserved their composure. Even Boyd Peyton had been carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment and had risen to his feet with the rest. A swift glance of approval which Mary Annan shot at him more than repaid him. Darrow, who had devoted himself, with the chivalry of the kind-hearted gentleman, to Pinkie Peyton, intercepted the glance, and his heart sank in consequence.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GAGE IS THROWN

BEFORE the cheering died away the door giving entrance from the hall was suddenly thrown open and a young man in the uniform of a corporal of the Light Cavalry burst unceremoniously into the room. Clicking his heels together, he made a military salute to the host.

"Excuse me, Judge Annan," he said, "and ladies and gentlemen all, but I've come for Sergeant Darrow. Orders, sir; he's wanted at the armory immediately."

"Madam," said Darrow, rising to his feet and bowing to Mrs. Peyton, "by your leave. Judge, Miss Mary, and gentlemen all, I bid you good-evening. Duty calls me. Now, corporal, I am ready."

"Stop, corporal!" said the governor. "What are your orders?"

"Orders to muster the troop of cavalry at the armory at once for active service, sir," said the corporal, a young fellow called Hamilton Pleasants, known intimately to everyone in the room.

"And what then?"

"I know no more than that, your excellency."

"Ah, gentlemen," said the governor, "there is the ideal soldier. He obeys orders without question. Well, sir, you and your company shall know, and the world shall know, what your orders are before the sun rises. Where is the armory?"

"It's down on Massachusetts Street, sir," said Darrow.

"No, sir, excuse me," said the corporal, quickly, "it's on Charleston Street."

"How's that?" exclaimed Colonel Peyton, in surprise. "I know no street by that name."

"Gentlemen," said the mayor, "council passed a resolution this afternoon renaming all streets that were previously named after Northern States, after the glorious cities and commonwealths of the South. Gentlemen, we will wipe out every vestige of the North from our records as we obliterate the oppressors from our hearts," he continued, amid laughter and applause.

"Good luck and Godspeed to you, Sergeant Darrow," said Mary Annan, rising and coming swiftly around the table to his side and taking his hand, her eyes shining with animation. "Wherever you go, and whatever you do, our hearts are with you."

The young soldier wrung her slender hand and then, without a word, bowed deeply, turned sharply on his heel, and left the room, followed by Pleasants.

"Is this war?" queried the Rev. Dr. Bampney.

"No, sir," replied Colonel Peyton, "this is play."

"Yes," added the governor, "but in the end it will be war of the grimmest kind."

"Alas!" said the judge, "I fear so. Meanwhile, before we go into the drawing room, where I have invited the young folks to assemble this evening for a little dancing party, let us fill our glasses once more and put away from us all thoughts of strife and war, of politics and principles, to which I fear the ladies may fancy we have given too much attention in their charming presence."

"No, no," cried Mrs. Peyton, "we are as interested as you are."

"Yes," said another, "we would rather have heard the discussion than talk ourselves upon any other subject."

"Ah, well," said the judge, "let us put it all aside now. Gentlemen, I give you the health of my daughter Mary, the pride of my heart, the pride of my old age. There she stands, gentlemen, just budding into womanhood, with all the future before her. Drink to her happiness, drink to her welfare, if you love me."

"Stop!" cried the girl. "It is my birthday, it is my hour. Perhaps I may speak, though a woman. Let me substitute a toast, father. I know what our good friends would fain say, and what they think. They give me too many evidences of their affection for it to be in doubt," she went on impetuously, the words rippling to her lips, the color mantling to her face, her eyes sparkling with excitement. "Let no one drink a toast to me, but those who love me, who wish me well on this day, my birthday, drink first and only

to the old South, which is to be the new South, and the great Confederacy about to take its place among the nations. I give you the South, gentlemen!"

"The South! The South!" rang from one end of the room to the other.

The girl's voice rose in sweet intensity above the tumult.

"I want you to drink it with the resolution that you will pour out your heart's blood in defence of it, as lightly as you quaff the draught of wine."

As she spoke she lifted her glass, as all the others did with one acclaim, but before touching it to her lips her eyes turned to Boyd Peyton. He was pale but determined. As he met her glance he unsteadily seized his own glass in a trembling hand, shot one meaning look toward her, lifted it and then drained it! Her heart almost stopped its beating at this evidence of his final adherence. The colonel, who had watched him with equal intentness, gladly exclaimed under his breath, though more than one heard his words:

"Thank God! The woman has done it at last!"

With gratitude too deep to be expressed, he, too, drank the toast.

The action of the young man, whose hesitation, as well as his position as a naval officer, had been the subject of discussion among all his friends, was noticed by many others present, and as the glasses were set down upon the table the men broke forth into cheers again, cheers for him.

"Damme," cried the colonel, in his excitement, "if

this is the spirit of our women, with apologies to you ladies, what may we not expect from our men?"

Mary Annan turned to Peyton in the confusion.

"Have I done well? Have I said well?" she whispered.

"Almost you have persuaded me," said Peyton, smiling up at her.

"My son, my son!" said his father, coming toward him and laying his hand upon his shoulder, "Thank God! Thank God!"

The quick rattling of a drum outside broke the sudden silence which fell upon the company as the cheering at last died away.

"What's that? The long roll, eh?" cried the colonel, lifting his head and sniffing the air like an old war horse.

"It's a drum beating the assembly," said the mayor, who recognized the call from his West Point years.

"There it goes again!" cried another.

"Where is it?" asked a third.

"It comes from that direction," cried one pointing toward the front of the house.

"It's at the armory of the Cadets, down on Conti Street."

"They are coming this way," cried the colonel, as the rattling grew louder. "Quick! Let us see them!"

By common impulse the company surged toward the long French windows opening upon the gallery. Mary Annan was quicker than the rest, and Boyd Peyton was by her side. Their fingers fumbled at the

curtains and the fastenings of the blinds, and tore them open. In a moment the assemblage poured out upon the porch. They had sat unusually long at the table. Night had fallen, the soft, deep semi-tropic night with the stars blazing brilliantly overhead. The bright lights from the room behind them streamed through the windows revealing the gay party. As Mary Annan shivered in the chill air Boyd wrapped her shawl about her bare shoulders. He longed to press a kiss upon them. She threw her head upward and backward, as he did so, and flashed one glance from those glorious brown eyes upon him which intoxicated him. He would have thrown away the world for her—then!

Out on the street the troops were coming. The lights from torches carried by negro boys on the flanks sparkled upon the bayonets. As they drew nearer the fifes joined the drums in that already popular song, "Listen to the Mocking-Bird."

It shrilled through the dark and crowded streets. The entrancing strains rang above the cheers and shouts of the crowd. How handsome and mysterious the soldiers looked in the uncertain light! After the Mobile Cadets came the German Fusileers, then the Independent Rifles, then the Washington Artillerymen, and in the rear the Light Cavalry.

"Oh, where are they going?" cried Mary Annan to the governor, who stood by her side.

The old governor hesitated a moment and looked at her quizzically.

"You can tell us now, surely, sir," she urged, laying her hand upon his arm.

The governor hesitated still, but finally made up his mind.

"My dear Miss Mary," he said at last, with fatherly kindness, raising his voice as he spoke so that the whole assemblage could hear him, "we are going to forestall the United States troops who were ordered South on New Year's day. I have directed the cavalry to seize the Mount Vernon arsenal! I have ordered them to turn over the arms to the military force of the State!"

"And the Cadets, and the rest?" interrupted the young woman.

"They are going down to take and garrison Fort Morgan!"

A deep sigh seemed to rise from the company on the porch as they realized the fateful import of the governor's words. It was followed by a burst of applause, but the drums and fifes were just opposite the railing now. The captain of the battalion took in the group on the gallery, but a few yards away—the governor, the mayor, the women. He turned sharply. A word of command rang out. There was a crash and clatter of arms. The light rippled over the moving bayonets as the men gave the marching salute. A great roar of cheers burst from the men and women surrounding the soldiers, and then the troops themselves joined in the acclaim. Above it all rang the shrill notes of the fife playing the "Mocking-Bird," breaking into the night with its passionate cadence.

Far over the railing leaned Mary Annan. Quick she tore the shawl from her shoulders and shook it,

flaunted it toward the passing soldiers. And Bob Darrow caught her glance as he rode, and thought it a greeting for him. At Mary's feet a small figure clad in a white nightdress, who had at that moment appeared on the scene, clung to her, and Tempe, raising her voice to win attention, called out:

"I heard the drums, sister, an' I came. Are they going to shoot against the Nunited States?"

The judge, with a singular contraction at his heart, caught up his youngest daughter and stilled her prophecy. And the regiment swept on.

Oh, if he lived for a thousand years, time could never erase from Boyd Peyton's memory the picture of that radiant figure standing on the edge of the balcony, that uplifted bare arm catching the shawl that he had thrown upon her shoulders, and waving it in the air like a bonny blue flag, while the "Mocking-Bird" was playing in the street!

CHAPTER XV

THE KISS THAT BETRAYED

THERE was no dancing-party that night. The action of the governor in ordering out the military had taken nearly every available young man from the city, and the few who were left were in no mood for festivities of the kind proposed. From a military point of view the expedition to take possession of the arsenal at Mount Vernon, up the river, and seize Forts Morgan and Gaines, down the bay, amounted to nothing. That is to say, no resistance was expected at any of the three places, and no danger would be incurred by the State troops. Indeed unless the United States Government had already re-enforced the forts at the mouth of the bay, from the sea, there was no garrison in them. There had not been time for the carrying out of the orders from Washington, which would have despatched troops to them, and all that the Alabamians would have to do would be to sail down and secure them, which they did on the morning of January 4th, easily dispossessing the garrison which consisted of one old sergeant of artillery and one mule!

But the moral effect of the expedition was tremendous. The election of deputies had plainly foreshadowed the secession of Alabama, beyond peradventure, as soon as the convention should be called, but no overt act had yet been committed by the State; there had been no act of hostility to the United States, of which Alabama still remained a part. This seizure of the property and arms and fortifications of the general Government by a particular State was a flagrant open defiance of the authorities at Washington. Unless the action of the governor were immediately disavowed by the people through their representatives, it meant war. The most stupid, the most careless, the most indifferent, perceived the significance of the two expeditions. Alabama was showing herself as bold and determined as South Carolina.

There was, however, on that account, no hesitation anywhere. The approval of the governor's action as soon as it became known, was well-nigh universal. He had shrewdly taken stock of public opinion and was entirely sure of his own ground before he moved. Indeed, from his point of view his action was soundly politic. If there was to be war the quicker the South got possession of the implements wherewith to wage it, the better; and if there was to be no war, the sooner the valuable auxiliary to these defensive preparations which some people believed might avert it, to be found in the forts and arsenals of the Southern States, should be seized, the better.

A few men like Judge Annan and Dr. Venosste, deplored the precipitate action, but postulating the ne-

cessity or the actuality rather of secession, even they recognized the propriety of it; and knowing any protests they were inclined to make would have been so futile as to be scarcely worth utterance, they kept silent. Indeed, in southern Alabama, while the people were divided between out and out advocates of immediate State action, without reference to any other State, and the "co-operationists," as they were called, who wished to hold back the State until the movement became general and co-operation and unity of action be thus assured, everybody was in harmony on the main question.

The governor, with the pressure of anxiety and responsibility hard upon him, withdrew shortly after the passage of the troops, and the rest followed his example in taking their departure.

Peyton fortunately had time for a few words with Mary Annan before he left. As the assemblage was breaking up, and as his mother and sister were putting on their wraps in the house, he found himself alone with her on the balcony. He stood before her for a moment without speaking. Mary Annan's eyes shone like the stars above them. Her white figure melted in the darkness about them. Perhaps it was that gave her courage. She was a creature of impulse at best. She took her lover's hands in both her own and, with an instinctive gesture of passionate self-forgetfulness, pressed them against her heart.

"Thank you, thank you!" she murmured, not quite comprehending what she did in her excitement and

emotion, "but I knew how it would be. I knew that you would be true to us at last."

"To you, dear, to you," interrupted Peyton, softly, wholly under the spell of her beauty, drawing nearer to her as he spoke.

How handsome he looked, she thought. Her head sank beneath the almost fierce intensity of his gaze.

"Not to me," she urged, still not mistress of herself; "to the South."

"You incarnated that spirit for me to-night. Oh, how beautiful you were—you are!" The words fairly rushed from him. "How I loved you! Tell me, tell me again. Have you no kinder word for me now, now that I am yours—now that I belong to your cause? Ah, sweet, I love you, I love you!"

She had released his hands and now stood silent before him in sweet if helpless confusion. Emboldened by her silence, by the yielding that spoke in her position, he stole one arm around her waist. She did not withdraw. She did not resist. She stood quite still. But her heart, oh, how it beat and beat!

"Have you no answer?" he whispered, and as she made no reply he bent and kissed her hair falling over her blushing cheeks. "Speak!" he urged.

"Almost—you—persuade me," she whispered, brokenly, softly.

They were his own words spoken a moment since. As she lifted her face slowly to speak to him he bent his head further and this time, instead of her hair, he kissed her lips. She yielded herself to his burning caress in a surrender as sweet as it was unexpected.

"Oh, what have I done?" she cried, wildly, a moment later, leaning back from him and burying her hot face in her trembling hands.

"Made me the happiest of men, dearest love, if that kiss be forgiven," Peyton answered, drawing her to him, insistent to pursue his advantage and waiting the longed-for admission from her lips.

He was steeped in love, forgetful of everything. He knew not what he had said or done; all his thoughts at that moment were upon her. He had held her in his arms at last, he had kissed her. She loved him. What else was there to know, or to think about, in the whole wide world?

"Boyd, dear," said his mother, and it was the first time in his life that her call was not welcome to him, as she came out on the porch at that very moment, "we are waiting for you."

"I am coming, mother," he replied, vainly trying to stifle his bitter disappointment. "I was just saying good-by to Miss Mary, here," he said, stepping into the light, where he was followed a minute later by the girl.

She had to come forward though she shrank from it; the conventions of her society required her to speed her parting guests. The keen eye of the older woman saw the hot blush still mantling in Mary Annan's cheek, she marked the glisten of tears upon the eyelashes, and drew her own inference. She was very, very happy. Her son, her oldest son, the pride of her life, who had been hesitating as to his course of action, seemed at last to have made a decision, a de-

cision in accord with her wishes and the wishes of her people; and lo, by it, he seemed to have won the dearest wish of his own heart also, if the older woman could look back into the past and recognize out of her own experience the signs of affection.

"My dear, my dear," said Mrs. Peyton, softly, drawing the girl to her and pressing a kiss upon her cheek, "I trust you have had a happy birthday."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Peyton," answered Mary; and then, "Do women cry when they are very happy?" she asked.

"They always do, my dear," replied the matron.

"I never wanted a mother so much as now," whispered the girl.

She dropped her head on the elder woman's shoulder, and her slender body shook with sobs.

"Ah, my child," said Mrs. Peyton, folding her gently to her breast, "no one can quite take a mother's place, but you can cry here on my shoulder; for that I'll serve."

"Indeed I shall not, then!" said the capricious girl, with quick change of mood, raising her head, forcing back her tears and forcing forward the smiles. "I have had the happiest birthday, and such good news! Good-night. I want to come and see you to-morrow morning," she continued. "Good-night, Mr. Peyton."

The drive home of the Peyton family in the carriage was a quiet one. With womanly tact Mrs. Peyton had cautioned the colonel against saying anything to Boyd about his resolution or about Mary Annan.

Only Willis, with his inexhaustible flow of spirits, kept up the conversation, which was more of a soliloquy on his part than anything else. Willis had come down with the carriage expecting to join in the dance, the battery not having been ordered away, and had concluded to go back with the family.

"How handsome Hamilton Pleasants looked when he came in," suddenly said his sister, during one of the infrequent pauses of his lively locution. There was a strange note in the young girl's voice, as she made this harmless remark, which no one caught except her twin brother. He rattled on with his nonsense, but when Pink felt him clasp her hand with one of his own and pat it gently with the other in the darkness, she took great comfort in the action. There was much sympathy between the twins.

Meanwhile the mother and her other son sat side by side in the carriage. The mother patted the son softly and tenderly from time to time, her hands wandered lovingly over his person; she was intensely happy and relieved, but he was not. He should have been. He had settled a grievous question, and he had won the greatest prize in life. Uncertainty and unrest should have left him, but they had not.

Before they separated for the night the old colonel took his son in his arms, a most unusual action for him, and pressed him to his heart.

"My lad," he said, "I am very proud of you. I knew it would come right in the end."

CHAPTER XVI

THE SIFTING OF PEYTON

AH, but had things come right, after all? There are decisions which do not decide. Was this one of them? How beautiful that girl had looked, the very incarnation of Southern beauty, of the South he loved. Loved? Yes, the word was true. He loved it entirely. He loved the people, their habits and ways, he loved the land, he loved the water that washed the shores, the mountains that lifted their crests into the heavens, the palm-tree, the live-oak, the magnolia, the flowers that bloomed on them, the mocking-birds that sang in them, the cotton fields—aye, he loved the slaves that tilled them. He would give his life for the South cheerfully, gladly; but what was he to do? There are harder things than life to give.

He had sworn allegiance to the United States. Certainly there was no comparison as to the station of the two in his estimation. His heart cried out for the State, for the South, but that something he could not define possessed him so powerfully that in the still

watches of that long night it almost drove him to despair. He could not give up his allegiance to the United States. Yet he had, in fact, done so!

He had been carried away by the enthusiasm of the men at the dinner, whom from his earliest childhood he had respected and venerated, whose opinions he had prized, whose approbation had been his highest reward. There was good old Dr. Bampney, holy, saintly, learned priest, who had indoctrinated him in the mysteries of the religion he professed; and Dr. Venosste and Judge Annan, and his fiery, noble, soldierlike, distinguished old father; there was the governor of the great State, the mayor of the city, educated at the sister school to his, at West Point, and all the others. Could they be wrong?

And there was Mary Annan. Oh, what a picture she had made, standing erect and slender, with sparkling eyes and heaving bosom and flushed cheeks, the very incarnation of that ideal of romance and beauty around which the chivalry and gallantry of the South centred. She loved him at last, at last!

The fire of passion which flamed in his own heart had communicated its heat to her. This glorious, radiant creature, just budding into womanhood, with all the passionate possibilities of unlimited devotion latent in her being, in her soul, loved him! He had kissed her. His eyes misted, his head swam, as he thought of it. He had pressed his own lips upon the lips that had mocked him in girlish laughter through many a day and dream. He had held her for one brief eternity in his arms unresisting. Almost he had

persuaded her, she had said. The mighty change that he had prayed for had come over the girl. "Almost persuaded"—his own words! Good God, he had won her by proffering an allegiance he could not keep—by adherence to a cause from which his soul shrank!

It was out. He could not do it. Something compelled him to be true to the uniform that he wore, to the government he had sworn to protect and defend. As between State and Nation, with every desire on earth leading him to State, he must choose Nation. He had to do it! His honor demanded it! There was no other way.

Stop! How could he do it? It would break his mother's heart. He had been swept away by his own feelings. No one had forced him, he had been under no restraint. He had given a public testimony, almost a pledge, of his own free will. Could he keep it? Could he break it? What would his father say if he did? He had folded him in his arms a short time since with rare and touching affection. He had blessed him. It would break his heart too; yet there could be no blessing unless his own conscience approved of his own action.

And Mary Annan? The consequences of his surrender and hers rose before him. He had been a coward, a craven, a scoundrel. The kiss that he had taken from her, unresisted, burned in his soul. He had stolen it. Gratitude had struck at her defences. The struggle that she had watched with bated breath in his soul, that she had stimulated in every way that

woman could, had resulted, as she thought, in victory for her, for her cause, and in the sweet abandonment of the triumph she had yielded. A pilferer, he, a purloiner, a common thief, to have stolen upon false pretence the sweetness of a woman's lips who had trusted in his honor. That he loved her was no excuse. The deeper condemnation there. Honor? Was not his pledged? Or was it already lost?

Under the spur of this acute indictment he wished, he prayed, that he might die that night, and but for the precepts in which he had been trained he might have put an end to a life which, in the decision forced upon him, brought misery everywhere, even to himself.

His father, his mother, his love! What a dream she had been as she stood in the light with the blue shawl fluttering over her head like a flag as the soldiers marched by playing the "Mocking-Bird!" He liked her best, though, as he saw her face shining in the darkness and heard her whisper, "Almost you persuade me." Almost, almost she had been persuaded, and by a mistake, by a falsehood! Oh, the deep damnation of his deed! What could he do? Was not now his honor as a gentleman pledged to her? There had been a sacrament of love and union in that sweet meeting of the lips; if he repudiated her cause it would be a sacrilege.

Yes, he must keep to the letter of his bond. Satan had bought him with a woman's heart, and oh, the irony of the association! The woman was as pure as a child, as innocent as an angel. Sometimes a gentleman was

called upon to sacrifice even his honor to a woman; perhaps this was such a call. Yes, he would do it. When he had kissed her he had given away the right to change. He would be a soldier of the South if it killed him. Please God it might. If war came he should seek death in the front rank and end it all.

CHAPTER XVII

"TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE"

THERE came to Peyton during that long, ghastly night neither sleep nor dreams. He rose very early in the morning before the others. After his agonizing vacillations he had resolved to throw conscience and everything behind him and keep to the South; but he could not bear their congratulations and approbation at that time. He could not stand them. He called for his horse, and in the gray dawn galloped down through the sleeping town and out upon the old Shell Road.

Down the white track by the heaving sea, under the moss-draped live-oaks, he urged his willing horse as if by rapid motion he could shake off the demon of uncertainty which clutched him again. Could he never make up his mind, he thought? He did not know what to do. In every direction seemed destruction. Meantime he could ride. He set his teeth hard and drove the spurs into his horse as if the physical effort could displace the mental struggle. On and on he sped.

Here at last was the spot where they had stood when Darrow had brought the news of the secession. He passed it by like the wind. If he gave her up, Darrow would win her. Of that he was certain. He had not forgotten how she had wished his rival God-speed the night before. His recantation might turn her back again. Happy Darrow! There was no turmoil in his soul. He knew his duty. He saw it plainly and did it, yet the reward would be Peyton's in the end. But would it?

Miles beyond the end of the Shell Road he drew rein at last and stared out over the gray waters of the bay, rolling cold and leaden under the lowering sky. How different from the other day! The chill melancholy of the surroundings accorded with his feelings. But he was not cold. The blood ran in molten riot in his veins and flushed his dark face a dull red color. His gaze turned at last toward Fort Morgan, invisible, of course, on account of the distance, yet he could imagine it. He had been there many a time, he had sailed every foot of water in that bay in his own boat. He knew it as he knew the shore, and Mary Annan had been with him often too. Could he never get away from her? The old fort, which for forty years had borne aloft the Stars and Stripes, to-day was under another banner. The troops of Alabama were in charge. His State, his troops—for he was one of them—arrayed against the United States!

No, by the God above him, no!

He wheeled his horse sharply, struck his rowels

deep into the quivering flank in unconscious cruelty, and dashed back into the town. On and on he galloped, retracing his earlier ride. The trees raced by in rapid succession. Presently he reached the Shell Road again, but there was no intermission to the wild gallop in which he urged his horse, and every hoof-beat that crashed upon the white way hammered out, —"Traitor!" "Scoundrel!" "Blackguard!" "Lover!" and moved him not. Could he hold to this last determination? Was it in him to hold to anything at last?

He reeled in his saddle sometimes, but drove his horse recklessly on. Presently he entered the outskirts of the town, and in a few moments he was in the middle of it. He held himself straight and checked the speed of the horse slightly, though he came down Emmanuel Street at a rattling pace. The horse had grown as reckless as he. As long as he had strength he would run forward.

Peyton saw those about him as if in a haze. He noticed people staring after him, lifting their hats to him. When two or three were assembled by chance he heard his name called loudly. As he turned the corner into Dauphin Street, and galloped across the square, he marked the Light Infantry Company assembling before its armory. They sent up a mighty cheer as he passed them by and turned up St. Francis Street. They were calling his name, too, and with approval. Men waved their hats to him as he swept on. What did it mean? Suddenly it flashed upon him. They had heard that he had decided, and they

were greeting him with joy and acclamation. Ah, they little knew!

He got out of the city presently. Now he turned into the gate of his home. He must meet his mother, his father, and have it over. He suddenly recalled that last night on the porch Mary Annan had promised to come and see his mother that morning. Perhaps she was there now. For the first time in his life he shrank from meeting her.

As he cantered up the long avenue from the gate to the house his pace slackened. His grip of the reins relaxed and the exhausted horse dropped into a walk. A few paces brought them to the steps leading to the porch, where he threw himself from the saddle. The horse stopped and stood with drooping head, panting and gasping, his sides heaving from the terrible ride. Weariness and dejection spoke in every line of his body, but they were no whit more marked in the horse than in the rider. A sharp call brought some of the stable boys, and as the horse was led away Peyton mounted the steps. His brother met him at the door. With a quick glance of sympathy the boy divined something of the situation.

"They are all in the drawing-room, Boyd," he whispered, hurriedly. "Heavens, old fellow, you look like death! Go up to your room and change your muddy clothes. Mary Annan and Bob Darrow are in there too. He was sent down from the arsenal to report to the governor, and came here afterward to see you. The rest of them don't know you're here. Where have you been? Brace up, old man, quick!

Here is a letter for you. Do get yourself in some sort of trim. The Light Infantry are coming down here. They will be here in half an hour. They have elected you captain and are coming to notify you. Hurry, hurry! I will keep the folks busy until you get down."

CHAPTER XVIII

PEYTON STICKS TO THE FLAG

PEYTON staggered up the stairs somehow and went to his own room. He threw himself upon his knees before his bed, as he had done when a little child, stretched out his hands before him on the cover, and buried his face between his arms. His body shook with tearless sobs. He could form no words of prayer, but in that attitude the thoughts of his heart went up to God in broken petitions. Into the agony of that soul the Master looked. To those unformed prayers he made answer.

Long time the young man knelt there growing quieter with each moment. Presently he lifted his head and his glance fell upon the letter which had fallen from his hands and lay before him on the bed. His face was paler than before if possible. There were haggard, ghastly lines in it, the grim accompaniments of soul torture, yet likewise indications of resolution. That curious set look, that tightness of the lips, that little protrusion of the chin, that drawing together of the brows, had come into his

face once more. Probably that look they gave him would never leave him again. He had passed through the fire. He had been tried in the crucible and he had not been broken.

He had come to a decision final and irrevocable. He would do his duty—and he knew now what it was —no matter what happened, whose heart broke, what appeals would be made to him. Friends, family, love —they were cast into the balances in that human soul and outweighed by another claim. As he rose to his feet he picked up the letter. It was an official envelope addressed in a familiar hand. Eagerly he tore it open. There fell from it his long-expected commission as ensign in the United States Navy and orders revoking his leave and directing him to report at once to Washington. The moment of decision was then at hand in every sense. Such an order brooked no delay. It could only be met by compliance or resignation. With these official papers was a letter, a letter in a hand he knew. Laying the others by his side he sat down on the bed and perused the few lines. The name signed to it was little known outside of naval circles, but in a year the world would be ringing with it. It was an appeal, an appeal to his conscience, to his honor, to his sense of duty, from a brother officer, an old man greatly his senior in rank, who had been a second father to him; an appeal to his loyalty, to his patriotism as an officer; and finally an inspiring expression of confidence which was balm to his soul, and the theme of the letter, the text of it, as it were, was, "Stick to the flag!"

"Thank God!" he said, laying the letter down. "Thank God that I had decided before I broke the seal!"

The music of a fife and drum came swelling up the road. He ran to the window that looked toward the gate. The Light Infantry was just turning into the avenue and coming toward the house. The soldiers were accompanied by a great multitude of people on foot, on horseback, or in carriages. What had Willis said? They had elected him their captain! Him! He laughed, though there was little mirth in the sound he made.

Well, he would meet them fairly and squarely now. He would tell them frankly and boldly before father, mother, friends, and sweetheart. Thank God they were all there! It could all be done in one blow. They were coming nearer. He must go down and meet them.

Stop! He could not meet them in this disordered dress.

He ran to his closet, drawing off his clothes as he went, and then put on others that he selected as quickly as possible. The troops were at the porch now. He could hear the rattling of musket stocks on the walk as they were brought to "order arms" and then to "parade rest." The yard seemed filled with people. Hastily buttoning his coat, he turned to meet Willis in the door.

"Good heavens, Boyd!" said the boy, glancing at him anxiously, "what did you do that for? Won't you take them off? They are——"

"No," said his brother, brushing by him. "Come on."

Followed by Willis, Peyton ran down the stairs, through the hall, and out on the porch. There immediately before him was drawn up the company of riflemen. Surrounding them was a great concourse of people. On the porch stood his father and his mother and sister. The old man's face was flushed with pleasure, his eyes were shining with proud and happy light. Animation and satisfaction expressed itself in every line of his erect figure. On one side stood Bob Darrow, handsomer than ever in his becoming uniform.

There also, looking more radiant and beautiful than he had dared even to dream of her, was Mary Annan. The color was burning in her dark cheek; her eyes, too, were ashine. Her eager glance dwelt upon his face almost lovingly as he entered the porch, and the next moment comprehended his clothing with a start of surprise. Following her example, they all looked at his tall, slender figure and noticed with astonishment that he was clad in the full uniform of an ensign in the United States Navy, even to his sword, which he held lightly by the scabbard in his left hand. But they had no time to comment on the singularity of his action, for another sharp command rang out:

"Company! Attention! Carry arms! Present arms!"

The drill of the company was excellent. As the men lifted the muskets from the ground and held them

rigid in front of them, a faint smile of approval came into Peyton's face.

"Colonel Peyton, ladies and gentlemen, and especially Mr. Boyd Peyton," Johnstone, the lieutenant of the company, began, with an eloquent gesture comprehending everybody, "as you know, the Light Infantry have been without a commander for over a month, owing to the death of our late lamented captain. We have been carefully deliberating since that sad event as to the choice of our next commanding officer. We are proud to believe, sir, that it is a high honor to command a company like this, whose ranks are filled with the best blood of Alabama. We believe that if the company has opportunity to show its soldierly qualities upon the field of battle it will prove its mettle, and we have wanted not merely a commander of courage and of family, to lead us—there are many in our ranks who possess such qualifications—but we want a man of experience, a man who has been bred to the profession of arms who can teach us what we lack. It is needless to say that our thoughts have been upon you, Mr. Peyton, ever since your return to the home of your fathers last month. But, sir—you will forgive me, I am sure—although we were morally certain, we had no public assurance until last night as to your feelings toward the Southern Cause. But the story of your decision has been noised about by your fellow-citizens to our great satisfaction, sir. The company was assembled this morning and we held an election, and I have the honor to inform you, sir, that you have been unanimously elected to be our captain. God save

the State of Alabama and the Confederate States of America that shall be!"

"Three cheers for our new captain!" said the first sergeant, stepping forth from the ranks as Johnstone finished his address.

But they were allowed no opportunity to give a cheer or make a sound. What was said by their newly elected captain froze the hurrah on their lips, almost stopped the beating of their hearts.

"Stop!" instantly cried Peyton, in a clear voice heard on the very outskirts of the assemblage. "You are mistaken, gentlemen. In part, at least, I did in some degree engage myself to the South last night."

"In some degree!" cried a girl's voice, piercing the awful silence, shrill with surprise and horror.

It was Mary Annan.

"Carried away by the enthusiasm of the party," went on Peyton, steadily, looking down at the surprised, awe-stricken faces of the men before him, although the sharp cry of the girl pierced his very soul, "moved by the example of venerated friends, an honored father, and influenced by——"

For the life of him he could not prevent his glance then from sweeping around until it rested upon the face of the woman he loved, standing by the railing, which she grasped with astonishing intensity, and staring at him with a horror-struck, bewildered, piteous face scarcely less white than his own. The cold sweat beaded upon his brow as he looked. He felt something rising in his throat and choking him. His heart struck him like a trip-hammer. Still he persisted.

"For—various reasons, gentlemen, which need not be mentioned," he continued more slowly, moistening his lips nervously, but still resolute to go on, "I—I—forgot myself."

A deep groan burst from the lips of the colonel behind him. The old man put his hand to his head and staggered as if he would have fallen. The bitterness of death was with him, and added to it the agonies of shame. His son a traitor! Oh, God, could that be?

"My son, my son!" cried his mother, in a voice tense with emotion. "Think! Think! What is it you are saying?"

Darrow stepped across the porch and stood with clenched hands and threatening brow beside his lifelong friend, the incarnation of force and menace. In his soul, too, Mary Annan's bitter cry was ringing. Peyton looked neither to the right nor left.

"Gentlemen," he continued, moistening his dry, parched lips again and again, "I love the South. My heart is with her. Here are father, mother, friends, and—the woman I love as well. I would give my life blood for them, but I cannot give up my honor. My duty constrains me. I am an officer"—with a magnificent gesture he lifted his hand to his cap and removed it—"of the United States." Was his strength coming back to him at the sound of that beloved name? Yes, yes, thank God! He went on more firmly: "I have sworn allegiance to the United States. I must be faithful to my duty. Here is my commission as ensign, here are my orders to report at Washington at

once. I must go! I cannot be your captain, gentlemen, much as I appreciate the high honor, because I must serve the United States."

"To hell with the damned traitor!" shrieked a man in the outskirts of the crowd, lifting his fist in wrath, and, catching his example, the yard rang with cries and shouts.

"Down with him!"

"Mob him!"

"Let's ride him on a rail!"

"Curse the nigger-lover!"

"Down with the black Republican!"

"Gentlemen," said the old colonel, galvanized into life by this awful display of passion, "no more of this! I beg you, no violence. This—that was—my son has made his choice. Leave him. Leave us, I beg of you. Let him go forth alone. The contempt of friends, the hatred of acquaintances, repudiation by his father and mother, and by those who loved him, will be punishment enough."

Peyton's mother bowed her head upon her daughter's shoulder, and her body shook with sobs. Mary Annan still stared as if fascinated at the immobile face of Peyton. Why, why—even in that awful moment, the query flashed into the girl's mind—had she ever called him a dreamer?

He stood looking neither to the right nor to the left, staring ahead at the company of Light Infantry with a face as set, as hard, as cold, as if carven out of marble.

At his side stood Darrow, shudders running over his

body. One touch, one spark, and he would have struck down his whilom friend. Peyton realized this. He was sick with horror at the thought. He shuddered too. Was it fear? What was it? Was he a coward indeed? By the living God he would stand there upon that porch and face them all if the next heartbeat were to be his last.

"We came for a captain," said the first sergeant, suddenly, as the tumult and the shoutings died away, "and we are going to have one. By your leave, leftenant. Comrades, I nominate for our captain, Sergeant Bob Darrow, of the cavalry, if he'll take it."

"Darrow! Let's have Darrow!" shouted the others.

"Those who are in favor of the election of Sergeant Robert Darrow will say 'Aye,'" said the lieutenant, promptly.

A great shout of approval burst from the company.

"Men," said Darrow, hoarsely and brokenly, "I appreciate the honor. After the treachery we have heard here I can only do my part as a loyal son of the State. I accept the office, and, please God, if the battle come may we be found together in the front ranks."

The old colonel's face, no less white than that of his son, turned with stately calmness to the young soldier standing like a demigod on the steps of the porch. No wonder the physical nature of Mary Annan and of many another woman rejoiced in the splendid perfection of the young man.

"My boy," cried the colonel, seizing Darrow by the

hand, "you are a true son of the South. We are all proud of you."

And Mary Annan fled to the new captain's side and took his hand again, and would have kissed it in the excitement of that moment, but he would not permit her.

"I wished you Godspeed last night," she said. "I do it again now, with more heart than before."

"Gentlemen," said the colonel, as the cheering died away, "you will pardon me if I say I cannot ask you to partake of my hospitality under the present circumstances."

"We await your commands, Captain Darrow," said Lieutenant Johnstone.

"March your men to the armory," said Darrow. "I will be there in half an hour."

"You will understand me, friends and neighbors, I am sure," said the colonel to the others, "if I now beg you to leave us alone."

The group waited silent and motionless on the porch until the last straggler had departed from the gate.

CHAPTER XIX

DRIVEN AWAY

NOW, sir," said the colonel, turning to his oldest son.

"Wait, sir!" cried the girl, interrupting him and coming close to Peyton. "Do you call yourself a gentleman?" she asked him, fiercely, her hands twisting together nervously in a writhing, anguished motion. "Last night on the porch, after you decided, you said words of love to me—and I —I believed in you. Oh, hear the infamy, all! I believed in you, I trusted you. You put your arm around me; I did not resist. You kissed me—" She brushed her lips with the back of her hand in ineffable scorn, as she spoke, with a constantly rising voice. "Almost you persuaded me to love you. I gloried in you! Oh, was it a lie? Did you do it all to win a woman's lips? Are you a thief and a coward as well as a traitor?"

Peyton attempted to speak, but before he could do so Darrow grasped him roughly by the shoulders with both hands.

"Damn you, you infernal villain!" he shouted, shaking him to and fro in his powerful arms. "Did you dare to do that? By God, I'll kill you where you stand!"

But with a strength surprising in one so slender Peyton dragged himself away. His hand went to the hilt of his sword; the blade flashed in the air as he partly drew it from the scabbard.

"Stop!" cried the colonel. "Put up your weapon, sir! Your friends will need it, and on this porch we fight only with gentlemen."

"You are right, sir," said the young man, proudly, yet wincing under his father's sneer, thrusting his sword back into its scabbard; "they will need it, and they shall have it."

But his resentment at once gave place to other feelings. Those before him were his all. Might he not persuade them, justify himself?

"I can understand how you must feel, father—all of you," he said. "Miss Mary, you did persuade me last night. I intended to resign then. I kissed you with as loving and as true a heart as ever beat in a man's breast. For that kiss I am deeply sorry, and I humbly beg your pardon. Anything you can say of me cannot be as deep as the recollection of it. But it was not in false pretence. I was yours then, and yours, father, and yours, mother, and yours, Darrow. Now I belong to my country."

"Thank God!" cried Mary Annan, passionately, "I didn't promise you anything. It was gratitude—gratitude, do you hear?—rather than love. I thought

possibly I might love you, but I did not. I hate you! I loathe you! If you were in my heart I'd tear it out and trample upon it to put you out of my recollection."

She stamped upon the porch as she spoke. Then she shrank nearer to Darrow, laying her hand confidently upon his strong arm as if she had found a protector. She felt outraged, and the honest love and admiration of the young soldier were grateful to her.

"Say the word, Miss Mary," said that young man, instantly, "and I will kill him where he stands."

"That would be an easy solution," cried Peyton, bitterly. "I would welcome it indeed, were you to kill me like a gentleman."

"I would kill you like a dog!" hissed Darrow, stepping forward.

But two people intervened; one, strange to say, was Mary Annan, who caught his outstretched hand with a sudden fierce gesture, and the other was young Willis, who sprang before his brother.

"I'm only a boy," he said, coolly. "I don't agree with Boyd, here, but I'm a Peyton, and nobody shall speak so of him, much less lay hand upon him, in my presence."

"Thank you, Willis," said Peyton, slowly. "But don't get into any difficulty on my account; I can take care of myself. Father——"

"Call me not by that name, sir!" said the old man, sternly.

"Mother!" he continued, stepping toward the woman who bore him, and he noticed with added pain

that all the youthfulness and charm he had marvelled at last night had gone from her face, leaving it gray and broken and old.

As he stretched out his arms toward her she made a step forward, but the colonel caught her by the arm and swept her to his breast, saying, with cold determination, as to a stranger:

"This lady is my wife, and is nothing to you."

"Pink!" cried Boyd, in desperation, turning to his sister as a last resort.

But Pink had gone to Mary Annan, and the girls were clasped in each other's arms. Pink was crying bitterly, but Mary Annan, with her head high, stood by Bob Darrow, with a look scarcely less resolute and infinitely more bitter on her face than that on Peyton's.

"Listen, sir!" said his father. "You have made your choice. You must go. I wish neither to see you nor hear of you, and from henceforth you shall be as one dead to us. Your name shall not be mentioned in this house. If any child of mine shall have the inclination I forbid him or her to hold any communication with you. Here is no longer home for you. Your trunk shall be sent to the station to-night. The money I have held in trust for you from your grandfather's estate, amounting to some five thousand dollars, will be paid over to you at the bank to-day at three o'clock. I shall expect you to be there to receive it. That is all. Now you may go. We will endeavor to forget the disgrace you have put upon us, and I pray God I may never see your face again."

A low groan burst from Boyd Peyton's lips. He buried his face in his hands and shook like a woman.

"A horse is at your service," continued the colonel, impassively, "to carry you into town. Leave him at the stable, as usual."

"I will take nothing, sir," answered Peyton at last, nerving himself to face the inevitable—"nothing but the uniform and the sword I wear. I won't ask any of you to break father's command to speak to me," he continued, looking at the rest through misted eyes. "I will just say good-by to you all, and may God bless you. I dare not ask father to bless me. You don't know how terrible this has been to me, but I am a Peyton, too. I have my ideas of honor, and I must abide by them. Miss Mary, I am as earth beneath your feet, but, believe me, I have truly loved you and I shall love you to the very end."

There was a little silence. No one answered, and for a moment no one moved. Finally Bob Darrow slowly swung on his heel and deliberately turned his back on his former friend. The affection between them was gone, the friendship forever broken. Mary Annan stared at him, her lip still curling. Pink averted her head. The old colonel, still holding his wife in his arms, looked out beyond him through the trees over the head of the boy who would never gallop down the long avenue again. That silence, that ghastly silence, was broken only by the sobs of his sister and by the thin, low moan of his mother.

"Oh, Willis!" she cried to her husband, "he is my boy! Do not drive him off!"

"For God's sake, sir," said the colonel, furiously, "if you have a vestige of the instinct of a gentleman left in you, go!"

Peyton turned away instantly, and slowly descended the steps, each footfall upon the boards sounding like a death-knell to those left behind.

"By heaven!" cried Willis, impetuously, as his brother stepped rigidly down the path, "I can't stand it, and I won't!"

He sprang down the steps and in a moment reached his brother's side.

"Good-by, Boyd, old fellow," he cried, " I can't let you go without a word. We don't think as you do, but we know you will do your duty, and I will say God bless you for father and mother and Pink and myself. God bless you, and some day it will come out all right."

There were tears in the boy's eyes. He put his arm about his brother's neck and kissed him, and then stopped on the walk and watched him proudly go on and on.

They stood in silence until he turned out of the gate and disappeared down the road, never looking back. So Boyd Peyton left the home of his fathers.

"Willis," cried the colonel, sharply, as Boyd disappeared, "I forgive you this time, but try me no more. Help me to carry your mother indoors. I am afraid she has fainted. Daughter, run for some restorative."

. . . . . .

"Miss Mary," said Darrow, as they were left alone. "Is it true?"

"Is what true?"

"That he kissed you."

"Yes. Do you hate me for it?"

"I love you."

"Would you—do you wish me——"

"Do you love him?"

"I hate him!" she cried, stamping her foot again.

"Did you love him last night?"

"I thought so, but now I know I never did. I never shall. It is all over with. I despise him. I—you said you loved me. Do you want me now? Will you take me?"

Her face was flushed with passion. She was beside herself with rage and wounded pride. It was evident that she scarcely knew what she was saying or doing, as she stretched out her arms to him. It was not love, but what was it? Jealousy, resentment, revenge, or what? The temptation was great. If he took her at her word he might bind her to him. A week before he would have done it—he would have leaped at the chance; but now he was changed. It was different. Not thus would he win her. He showed his magnanimity when he spoke, and the girl, recognizing it, almost loved him.

"I love you," he said. "God only knows how I love you. To call you mine, to win you for my wife, is the dearest wish of my heart. But I can't take you this way. You don't know what you are saying. It would not be fair to you. I wonder if you know what

it costs me to say this. No, you can't know, but you will later. Meantime you must know, and by this, that I am yours, all of me is yours, and that the day you can say to me in your sober senses what you have just said will make me the happiest man on earth. Good-by; thank you, and God bless you."

He bent low over her hand, kissed it fervently, and left her alone. A soldier and a gentleman indeed, and never nearer to his desire than in that brave renunciation.

There was a bit of paper on the floor, lying at her feet. It was the last thing Peyton had touched. She had observed it mechanically at the time that it had fallen from his hand. It was an open letter, and he had touched it. She picked it up. It was a brief note. Throwing conscience to the winds she read it. The name signed at the end was an unfamiliar one to her.

"Farragut! David G. Farragut! Who can he be? Oh, is it he who has changed Boyd's resolution and broken my heart?"

She crushed the paper in her hand.

"Oh, my God!" she cried, as she turned toward the house. "Was ever woman so cruelly used as I? and, shame upon me, I love him still! No, no, I hate him!"

Poor Peyton, poor Darrow, poor Mary Annan!

CHAPTER XX

A WANDERER AND A VAGABOND

THE distance between the Peyton place and the town was several miles. Boyd Peyton was so exhausted by the scenes through which he had passed that he felt it would be almost impossible for him to drag himself into the town. His brain reeled from the tremendous strain which he had just undergone. The road swam before his dazed vision. These moments alone that followed were harder to bear than that crucial half hour on the porch. Then he had the stimulus of action, the excitement of doing something. Now it was just a dull plod, plod, plod, on the white road toward the town.

On his way to town people passed Boyd Peyton in wagons or buggies and marvelled at the unusual spectacle of a young man in a naval uniform, carrying a sword, walking with drooping head on the public road. One or two who recognized him stopped and offered him a seat. He refused these kindly proffers, however, with a silent shake of his head, so they were forced to pass him by. When he entered the city he found that the story of the scene

had been repeated by those who had participated in it, or witnessed it, and he had become a marked man.

He roused himself here, lifted his head up, summoned his strength again, and walked boldly forward. People ran to the doors of stores as he came along the street and stared after him, for the most part with curious, although sometimes with set, hard, malignant faces; and there were women—not many, but some—who looked at him with pity. The ragamuffins of the streets called after him here and there, and some one threw a stone in a puddle of muddy water by which he happened to pass, and spattered him. Those whom he had known intimately in days gone by avoided his gaze, turned aside as he approached, or else resolutely gave him the cut direct by looking him full in the face and giving no sign of recognition.

His was not a pleasant face to look upon then. Such sternness of repression, such mortal agony, beneath the outward iron of his visage, could hardly be imagined. People who saw it never forgot it. He walked slowly along his *via dolorosa* looking neither to the right nor to the left, seeking no recognition, paying no attention to anyone. His mind was in a frightful turmoil. It was reaching back to that awful scene on the porch. It was reaching out to the lonely misery of the future.

He was not entirely oblivious to the surroundings either, and there was forced upon him the necessity for a decision about what ordinarily would have been a trivial matter. Sometimes trivial matters in great crises save us from going mad. The train for

the North which he had resolved to take did not leave until evening. It was not more than two o'clock now, and he did not know where to go, where to stay, during the intervening hours. One thing was certain. He had almost reached the limit of his strength. Unless he could get some resting-place he would collapse in the street.

There was another duty to be done. He must go to the bank. The little fortune his father had spoken of was rightfully his own. It had come to him through his grandfather, and he was resolved to take it. A messenger from his father's place had passed him on the road, and the matter was undoubtedly arranged. To the bank on Royal Street, therefore, he turned his steps. Old Mr. Pleasants, the cashier, whom he had known from his childhood, who had always treated him with affectionate cordiality, met him at the door. Instead of giving him an invitation to come into the private office, as usual, for a little chat while the details of business were arranged, the old man, without a word of greeting or recognition, sternly motioned him to a seat near the window, and coldly indicated that he could remain there until the necessary formalities were concluded. The money, which he took in New York drafts, was fairly flung at him.

He stepped out of the bank door and looked hopelessly up and down the street. There was the Battle House, the principal hotel of the place. Well, why not go there? He resolved to do so. He noticed that the men shrank from him as he entered the rotunda and walked up to the desk.

"I want a room until this evening, and a meal sent to it," he said, picking up the pen preparatory to signing his name on the register.

"Very sorry, sir," answered the clerk, curtly, not to say rudely, "but we have no vacant rooms."

Peyton understood and, too proud to argue, turned and walked out of the hotel. Certainly he never calculated upon this. He had not realized the intensity of feeling which had been evoked by the situation, and which his action seemed to have brought to a head. In that whole community he seemed to be absolutely alone. The veriest wandering dog, the poorest vagabond out of the streets, could win more recognition and find more kindness than he.

Mastering the trembling of his limbs by a violent effort, he struck out aimlessly across the square, intending vaguely to go out on the Shell Road, anywhere, away from the observation of the curious, which galled his sensitive nature beyond control, when he was accosted in kindly tones by Dr. Venosste. He nearly gave way as he heard the familiar voice. Supposing his old friend was ignorant of the situation he at first paid no attention to it, but the doctor caught him by the arm and walked along by his side.

"Good gracious, Boyd!" he said, "you are as white as death, and trembling like an aspen! Where are you going?"

"I—I don't know," answered Peyton.

"Come with me."

"I don't believe—you know—what I have done," said Peyton, resisting.

"I know all about it, my boy," said Dr. Venosste, with kindly insistence. "We don't think alike on some things, but you have a right to your opinions. I believe you entertain them honestly. If your honor calls you to take the course you did to-day I, at least, shall never blame you. Meanwhile, you must come with me."

He turned the young man about, and they walked rapidly down Joachim Street toward the doctor's house.

"You must have something to eat and get a few hours' rest. If you don't you will faint here on the street."

"I must not do that, Doctor."

"No, of course not," said the doctor. "Here we are at last. Now come in."

"Doctor, who told you about—about—everything?" Peyton asked as he sank exhausted in an easy chair in the library.

"It is all over town, Boyd," replied the doctor, frankly. "I heard it from a dozen sources."

"I suppose everybody blames me dreadfully?"

"Yes," answered Dr. Venosste, "most people do. And they blame you the more because last night they thought you had decided. They don't like vacillation."

The doctor spoke kindly, but the truth of the accusation cut the young man. He had behaved shabbily. He should have decided it at once. Well, what difference now? It was all over.

"They are excited by the situation," continued his

friend; "their passions are aroused. I fear it will be some time before they will think of you differently. But it makes no difference to me; I want you to know that. This house is yours, so long as you choose to remain in it, and I shall be honored to have you here. I can respect the courage that it must have required for you to take such a step. Your conscience and your reasons are your own. Your friendship is mine."

"But, Dr. Venosste," said Boyd, "they will visit this kindness to me upon you. You would better let me go."

"No, no," said the doctor, firmly, "I think my position is sufficiently secure to enable me to do what I please. And whether it be or not I shall do it. Now you must have something to eat," he said, as his servant, who had been previously directed by him, entered the room with a tray containing a substantial luncheon.

"No," urged the doctor, pressing it upon him, "I will take no denial. Men must eat, no matter what crises they may be passing through. They must eat to live."

"Oh, Doctor," said Peyton, "I don't want to live! What have I to live for?"

"My lad, live to give some value to your sacrifice. Live to do your duty toward that side of this awful quarrel which your honor constrains you to take. Since you have done this thing, the manly part is to carry it through. Have no more vacillation or hesitation. There, that's better," he said, as Peyton, moved by his severe but kindly words, made some

effort to comply with the elder man's insistent request. "When the lunch is over I shall prescribe something for you—let me act as physician as well as friend—which will enable you to get a few hours' sleep. I take it that you did not have much rest last night?"

"No, nor for many nights," answered Peyton, gratefully. "But you must see that I am awakened, if I do go to sleep, in time to catch the six o'clock train. I am ordered to report at Washington at once, and besides there is nothing to keep me here now."

The doctor's potion and exhausted nature threw Peyton into a deep sleep, from which he was awakened by the doctor himself about five o'clock.

"Well," said the old man, "you look better, and I suppose you feel better."

"I feel somewhat rested, at any rate," said Peyton. "I do not suppose anything will ever make me feel any better in one sense."

"Yes, yes, lots of things will. Just wait. You will see," said the doctor, cheerily. "Youth and strength, they are the greatest remedies and anodynes in nature's pharmacopœia. Now make yourself ready, and I will drive you down to the station."

"If you please, Doctor," said the young man, resolutely, "I would rather walk, and I will go alone."

"That you shall not, for I intend to do myself the honor of going with you. And Dr. Bampney, who was here this afternoon to see you, will come too. He says he can't let you go without a word of farewell."

"You are very good to me, Doctor," answered Peyton. "'I was a stranger and ye took me in.'"

"Tut, tut, boy! You will never be a stranger in Mobile when I am here," said the old man, bustling out of the room.

Peyton followed him presently. As he stepped into the hall old Dr. Bampney came in, his venerable face aglow with feeling.

"My dear, dear Boyd," he cried, clasping his hands, "you have broken our hearts by your perversity, but we love you just the same. I do not know what future sacrifice you may be called upon to make, or how far you may be sundered from your people here, or whether war may come, but don't forget," continued the old man, his lip quivering, his eyes filling with tears, "that some of us will love you. I know you have not done this thing lightly or carelessly. I know what it means to you," he said, putting his hand tenderly on the young man's shoulder, "and some day it will all come right. Everything will all come right. You will think as we do, please God, or we will realize all of us, as some of us do now, that whatever you did, you did for the best, and because your honor demanded it."

"Thank you, Doctor, thank you," said Peyton, gratefully. "I pray so."

"Ah, Dr. Venosste," continued the clergyman, "here I am, you see, and we will go down to the station with our young friend."

Peyton felt that he had a guard of honor as he walked with these two venerable men through the streets, and other people felt it too. Some few who knew him spoke to him as he passed. At the station

he sent no message to anyone. What was the use of it? He made no explanations. What was the use of that, either? He just wrung the hands of the two old men before he stepped into the car and was whirled away. The last glimpse he caught of them Dr. Bampney had his hands raised in prayer or benediction, and the other older man stood uncovered by his side.

It would be a long time before Boyd Peyton came back to Mobile, and when he did, it would be in a different guise from that of a fugitive hounded from the streets.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REGIMENT MARCHES AWAY

IT was springtime at Mobile, and springtime to the South is as summer to the North. Already the trees were in full leaf and the flowers in full bloom. The long withering heats of summer were still to come. Events had moved rapidly. The Southern Confederacy was fully organized. Montgomery, Alabama, had been the scene of its birth. Fort Sumter had been fired upon. There was no longer any doubt that there would be war between the sections. The air was full of martial preparations. President Davis and President Lincoln had each called for troops, little dreaming either of them of the monotonous repetitions of the call that would be necessitated by the gigantic character of the strife about to be waged. Mobile had joyously offered its contingent, and to-day the first battalion of the first regiment to depart was leaving for the front. The march of events had made Bob Darrow a major, and Corporal Pleasants, his friend, was now a second lieutenant in what had been the Light Infantry, in Darrow's battalion. The troops were ordered to leave at

three o'clock. It was half after two now, and he was still lingering in the parlor at Annandale.

Mary Annan was excuse enough to make even a soldier forget his orders. She had developed strangely since that night a few months ago, when she had celebrated her birthday. If some of the merry audacity had left her, the sweeter dignity of womanhood, approaching if not yet come, had taken its place, and there was no loss. In the infatuated soldier's eyes she was more beautiful than ever. A change had come over him too. Rough soldiering, hard living, and high thinking had sobered him. He was a different man from what he had been that day he and Peyton had sat beside Mary Annan on their horses watching the troops march by. The better side of his nature had been aroused. It was coming to the front indeed. Very handsome he looked in his new gray uniform, booted and spurred and belted, his sabre clanking at his side—a magnificent cavalier. The girl's heart went out to him pleading there with every advantage that man could possess for her affection. He had courted her as if her avowal upon the porch had not been spoken, and she had rejoiced in the delicacy of feeling which had restrained him from the faintest allusion to it. But she had not yet given him her answer. She had found it difficult to make up her mind after all, although she honestly longed and strove to love him. In these parting hours he seemed to have conquered, but not without assistance from her. She had resolutely put out of mind another face grown strangely strong which had risen again and again be-

fore her, and at the last moment she had agreed to be Darrow's wife.

"When you come back," she said, "a victor; when this war, which will probably be soon concluded, is over, and we have conquered, you may claim me. Until then you—we—will wait. I promise you on my word and honor, the Annan word, the honor of a Southern woman, that I will be yours at that time—Robert."

How sweet the unfamiliar name sounded in his ear.

"My dear, my dear!" he cried, "you send me away with such a hope in my heart, such an incentive before my eyes, as will make me a paladin of valor. And you have made me selfish, too. I shall fight now not so much for the South as for you."

"No," said the girl, "the land, our dear land, first of all."

"Nothing, nothing," protested Darrow, vehemently, "shall be first but you. And now, having won you, I must go."

He stopped and looked wistfully at her.

"Take off your sword," she said, softly. "Unbuckle it and hand it to me. The belt, too."

Wondering, he complied with her request.

"Now stand there, still."

As she spoke she circled the belt about him and clasped the buckle. His heart swelled with pride and devotion as she did so. Then she drew the sword from the scabbard and kissed blade and guard, and then sheathed it and hooked it to the belt.

"Now I have girded you," she said, "and you are my knight, mine and the South's."

He was very close to her then.

"Mary?" he said, interrogatively, and not waiting for an answer he swept her into his arms and almost crushed her against his breast.

She struggled feebly, turned her head away, but he caught her cheek with his hand and before she knew it turned her face toward him and pressed a passionate kiss upon her lips. It was the second time a young man had kissed her.

Before she could cry out or make resistance, or utter a word, he had released her and rushed from the room. That kiss brought her to herself. It awoke the sleeping truth in her heart. It was not like the other. There was agony in the thought. Must she be the slave to a passion for a traitor to her country? Was she to break the honest heart of the young soldier who had gone from her full of hope and joy and elation? She swore in her soul that she would not. She would make him happy. Yet, for all that, she laid her head in her hands and sobbed, and sobbed as only a broken-hearted woman can.

The music in the streets called her to her senses again. As she had done on that never-to-be-forgotten night, she resolutely dried her tears, opened the window and stepped upon the gallery. The soldiers were making a parade through the town before they marched away. They were far up the street now; the music came to her faintly. The band was playing "Dixie," a tune that had thrilled and was to thrill half

a continent with its infectious melody, and which was to be enshrined in Southern hearts until the day of judgment should come.

Presently the music stopped and the cadence was kept up by the rattling of the drums. They were nearer now. The streets were full of people, black and white, rich and poor, high and low, cheering and shouting madly. It was a sunny, brilliant afternoon. The lights sparkled upon the bayonets, flashed from the brass buttons, gleamed on the officers' swords. There was the regiment itself, some of the companies already uniformed in the then unfamiliar Confederate gray. And following it were the escorting companies, soon to march to the front themselves in answer to similar calls. The troops represented every nationality that made up the composite town—the Garde Lafayette, the German Fusileers, the Washington Light Infantry, the Creole Cavalry, the Scotch Guards, the Emerald Rifles, the Alabama Artillery, the Light Horse Lancers, the Gulf City Guards, the Mobile Cadets, the first company in the whole South to respond to President Davis's first official call for troops for the Southern Confederacy, and many others. The city which had known four flags, the French, the Spanish, the English, and the United States, was now under the fifth, the stars and bars borne by the color company in the front of the line.

As the troops approached her the sound of the cheering grew in volume until as they passed the place where she stood it was a perfect roar. Yet not everybody was cheering. Women looked out upon the

moving mass with white set faces. Mothers sobbed, fathers trembled, wives yearned; hearts were breaking as the soldiers passed by. They had passed by many a time on one occasion or another, but this time they were going to meet real war. It would be years before any of them came back to that town. Indeed, hundreds of those who stepped gayly to the music in the pride of their youth, buoyant with hope, mad with the eagerness of inexperience, to fight, would never come back at all. The regiment would write its name high upon the roll of heroic organizations; its children would sleep till the eternal awakening on many bloody fields from the Rappahannock to the Mississippi. Peace to them! Glory to them!

Thoughts of this kind rose in the mind of the girl and almost choked her. There at the head was little Colonel Withers, with Lieutenant-Colonel Lomax, and there looking straight to the front, like the soldier he was, rode her lover. She stared at him so intensely that for one brief moment his face swerved and he shot one look at her. The glance was so fraught with passionate devotion, so permeated with buoyant hope, with loving gratitude, with resolution, with determination, that she shrank under it almost as if her heart had been pierced by an arrow. In that one brief glance she saw the soul of that man who loved her as she had never before seen it, and it was a good sight. And he carried away with him the picture of her as she stood above him with her hands clasped across her bosom, gazing at him. He would carry that memory into eternity itself.

As they looked at each other the fifes and drums of the regiment broke into the shrilling of the "Mocking-Bird," and with that air ringing in his ear, and her picture in his eye, he marched away.

Ah, ah, it would be a long day before Robert Darrow came back to Mary Annan, and he, too, would come in a different guise from his departure.

As she turned to go into the house the guns of the battery roared out a final salute while the young soldiers, full of hope and joy, embarked on the steamer for Montgomery.

"My dear child," said Judge Annan, coming into the parlor and finding Mary sobbing on the sofa, with little Tempe, very quiet now, kneeling by her side and stroking her hand with that infinite tact which sometimes very small children have, "why are you crying?"

"For—for—everything, father. I promised Mr. Bob Darrow to be his wife, when the war is over, and we have conquered, with your consent, sir. I cannot help but think how many of them won't—won't—come back," she sobbed.

"The war seems to get nearer to us, my child," said the old man, solemnly; "this is only the beginning. Alas, our poor country, our poor country!"

"Is Mr. Darrow going to shoot the Nunited States, Sister Mary?" asked Tempe, softly, in an awestruck voice.

Away out on the blue ocean, upon the heaving deck of a mighty ship-of-war, a young officer walked his

watch looking far away to the Southland in which was enshrined his heart, although his honor and duty had constrained him to fight under the flag floating above him, the flag of the United States.

Looking, dreaming, aye, even hoping! Oh, eternal youth!

BOOK III

THE STORM RAGES

CHAPTER XXII

FACING THE ODDS

HOW much had happened in two and a half years! Mary Annan had not dreamed that there could be crowded into so short a space of time events of such tremendous moment, so disastrous in their import to the Confederacy. Two years of constant fighting, of terrific battle from Virginia to Louisiana, coupled with the bloody repulse of Lee at Gettysburg and the surrender of Vicksburg, must have convinced the farsighted of the hopelessness of the endeavor to form a Southern Confederacy, unless the situation could be changed by outside intervention.

Yet the South still maintained its iron front, still with magnificent courage faced its overwhelming foe, mainly because it was not yet completely exhausted in its resources. There was still a slender reserve of strength which had not yet been drawn into the contest, and the people would not declare their cause to be a lost one until it had been tried out to the bitter end. Because they were men, like their foes, of that plain, sturdy, undaunted, determined American breed, they

would never give up, never abandon their efforts, until they had to.

Gripped by the terrible blockade of the seaboard, which clutched them by the throat, as it were; reeling under the awful blows on the Mississippi, in Tennessee, amid the hills of Pennsylvania, with resolution unabated they still fought on. The decimated, depleted battalions still looked to their weapons and held their lines. Nay, more with impetuous gallantry they actually assumed the offensive on every possible opportunity.

The fiction that one Southerner could whip five Yankees had long since been exploded, but 't is only just to the Southerner to point out that he faithfully endeavored to live up to that conviction. He found, however, that true manhood is not confined by isothermal lines, and that so far as this continent is concerned, climate has little to do with courage. He found the men of the North quick and eager to meet him on the field. Two years of fighting had given the sections a healthy mutual respect, which the old soldiers, at least, have never lost.

With each hour of the struggle some of the bitterness of it disappeared. The personal antagonism which had been so prominent was blown away by the cannon. Strange as it may seem, they fought good-naturedly—almost good-humoredly—and without malevolence. They still cherished the principles for which they contended; they were still determined and resolute to enforce them, but they did not hate and despise each other as a whole. Every battle showed

this. It was the politicians, the non-combatants, the prison guards, the contractors, who held and nourished the rancor. And—forgive me—to this class may be added the women. They are the only unreconstructed class to-day. For this there was a reason.

The hardest of humanity's tasks is, waiting while others act. To sit passive at home while the struggle is waged abroad; to watch with sinking heart for reports from the battle; to scan with deadly anxiety the monotonous lists of killed and wounded, fearful for the sight of a beloved name; to be left alone, to find one's self a widow in the twinkling of an eye, a mother bereft; to be hungry, ill-clad, to feel want where plenty had been; to hear children clamor and have nothing wherewith to satisfy them; to wait in terrified apprehension for the coming of the conquerors; to summon cheerfulness from breaking heart and trembling lip; to welcome the return of the defeated; to fly before the battle in the morning; to search upon the stricken field in the evening; to kneel by the bedside of the dying in the hospital—ah, God, this is what war means for woman! What wonder that it made—it makes—them bitter?

The born cowards are few and far between. However men may feel at first, they finally grow to love the atmosphere of battle. The rattle of small arms, the hiss of the rifle bullet, the scream of the shell, the roar of the cannon, like the shrilling of the trumpet, the rolling of the drum, rouse the virile man. The hardships of the forced march, the long exposure, the hard privation, are forgotten when the battle is joined,

and the small flag flutters from the staff in the stout arm at the head of the charging column. The touch of human shoulders in the resistless advance, the click of steel on steel in savage onset, aye, even the last desperate stand before some overwhelming foe, fill the soul.

> **" For how can men die better**
> **Than facing fearful odds,**
> **For the ashes of their fathers,**
> **And the temples of their gods ! "**

To struggle is to live. Oh, for one hour of such life, one short hour of heroic zeal, of high endeavor, of splendid courage on a stricken field, whether it be in the foreground of victory, or at the battle heart holding back the human tide of conquest. It is worth a cycle of inglorious ease, a century of ignoble quiet! When man, with his fighting blood up, the blood that has made him, feeble animal that he is, the conqueror of the world, has his back against the wall, or stands alone in the last ditch and strikes out for God and man, for truth and right, until the end, then he rises to the highest standard of his manhood, then he transcends the monotony of little life. It is the loneliness of the Cross that adds the last touch of sublimity to the sacrifice.

Oh, that splendid phrase of the great militant Saint Paul, when he says, "And having done all, to stand!" To stand beaten, broken, but undaunted, resolute to the end. To fall for a great and splendid cause, a high and holy duty, a lofty and cherished ideal—that is what we love. These are the compensations for the

horrors of the field. It is always the other man in our anticipations who is stricken down; and if the bullet finds us and snuffs us suddenly out—well, thank God, we did not know. If we must suffer long agonies because of it, we will at least have had the hour of the fierce savage joy which comes only to the fighter in the cause he loves.

But none of this is for the women. What wonder, then, that most of them were bitter? Tried in that awful fire, Mary Annan had emerged from the test, so far as it had been completed, another woman. The old judge, stricken to the heart by the division of his unhappy country, had pined and failed. When the news came blowing down the wind on that July day that Vicksburg had fallen and that the great artery of the Mississippi beat and throbbed under the old flag of the old Union; and when the dreadful story of the ebbing of the mighty tide of war at Gettysburg was received, when the last hope of the South went down as Pickett's columns reeled back from Cemetery Ridge leaving the heroic Armistead's dead body to mark high water on the hills, as if in accordance with his own resolution the judge folded his hands across his breast and became a citizen of another country, that is—let us hope—a heavenly one.

And Beverly Annan, a boy of sixteen, home from the Virginia Military Institute, overruling his sister's protests, had enlisted in the artillery, and gone down to Fort Morgan with the First Alabama Battery, where Colonel Peyton, now a brigadier-general, commanded all the defences of the bay.

"What!" cried the boy, when she expostulated with him and besought him, "the South in extremity, fighting for everything that men hold dear, and no Annan in the field! Yes, yes, I know I am the last of them, Sister Mary, except you and little Tempe, the last of the line; yet, if it must end, can it end in a better way?"

And so, laughing boylike beneath his tears, he had torn himself from her and was gone. Only Tempe remained, Tempe grown taller and larger and wiser, but Tempe much the same; not asking now if the soldiers were going to shoot the "Nunited States." The departure of troops from the city had become such an ordinary occurrence now as to awaken little attention.

Willis Peyton, perhaps influenced by his brother's profession, had resigned from the battery and had gone into the Confederate Navy, where he had already enjoyed a brilliant career on the *Sumter*. He was now on duty with other officers at Selma, up the State, where was building a great war vessel, destined to earn for itself an heroic name in future naval history. Mrs. Peyton and Pink lived at Annandale now. The additional expense of keeping up two establishments was great in these straitened days. Mary Annan, alone in the great house, craved the companionship of the elder woman whose daughter was her dearest friend. Most of the negroes of the two households had been sent away with the troops or were at work on the constantly increasing line of fortifications. Only a few of the house servants remained at home.

Outwardly things remained much as they had been before the war began. The breeze still swept across

the bay, laden with the heavy summer fragrance of the semi-tropic blossoms; the mocking-birds still sang in the live-oaks; but within everything was different. Mobile had not yet suffered for the necessaries of life, but luxuries had long since gone. For instance, it had been difficult, nay, impossible, for Mary Annan to purchase black goods for mourning wear when her father died. There was such a demand for that all over the South—and the North, too, for that matter—that had it not been for the resources of wardrobes of the past she would have been without it.

These growing privations fell hardest again upon the women, especially those of the aristocratic classes, who had been reared in such ease and luxury, with such abundance of goods and service, as we can scarcely realize now. But they made no murmur, accepted the situation without repining, rejoiced that they could contribute that little to the cause they loved.

CHAPTER XXIII

MARY ANNAN LEARNS THE TRUTH

MARY ANNAN had changed greatly in this period. The passionate, fiery, quick-tempered girl, who had reviled Boyd Peyton on that day on the porch, and then had thrown herself at Darrow's head in the next moment, was gone never to return. The old fire still lurked within her veins—it would live there as long as youth inhabited her heart—but much of the outward impetuosity was gone. Experience had opened her eyes. While her convictions were as strong as they had been, she had begun to see that others might think differently, that others might arrive at conclusions at variance with hers, and might be compelled by honor to maintain those conclusions, even though she believed them mistaken.

Without surrendering a single conviction, where she had despised, she admired; where she had hated, she respected; where she thought she had forgotten, she remembered; where she remembered, she loved! Yes, she was still devoted to the South, and would cheerfully have died for it. She had many a time longed that she were a man to draw a sword or carry a

musket in defence of her country. She would not have hesitated a moment between love and duty—she thought—but she had come to realize that, while duty may restrain, it is, after all, love that makes the supreme appeal. And the outward and visible shape which that supreme appeal took before her heart was not that of Darrow, to whom she was betrothed, but Peyton, whom she had rejected. She loved him! In spite of her pride, in spite of her cause, in spite of her will, in spite of everything, she loved him!

No one in Mobile had heard from Boyd Peyton since that day he had dropped out of their existence years before. But she had loved him with growing intensity ever since. To be sure, she had engaged herself to Darrow. She had persuaded herself in his presence that she could do it with safety; she had tried to blind herself to the truth, and she had clung to that engagement with desperate tenacity during the intervening years. But her eyes were opened, and she realized all too soon that the tie binding her to Darrow was merely one of honor and respect.

It was a pity that this was so, for Darrow had shown himself most admirable in the situations in which he had been placed. He had developed grandly. From major of his regiment he had risen to the command of an Alabama brigade, and in all the desperate fighting of the Army of Northern Virginia he had borne a splendid and heroic part. The State rang with praise of the young paladin. He had been wounded at Chancellorsville, but he had remained with the army and had refused a leave of absence to go home to Mo-

bile and recuperate. Darrow had neither father, mother, nor relative living, but the whole South would have been glad to receive him. Alabama was proud of him, Mobile rejoiced to claim him.

There was something quixotic yet admirable about the young man's position on the subject of home-coming. Mary Annan had promised herself to him when the war was over, and he could come back a victor, and until that time arrived he had promised to leave her alone. He would do it. He would keep that promise if it broke his heart. Like Uriah of old, he believed his place to be in the battle-line.

Frequent letters had come to her from him as the exigencies of his service permitted. Quaint, charming letters they were, too, manly, modest, humorous in a way, through them running the clash of arms, the echo of moving squadrons, the roar of battle, and all of them carrying to her the deep and mighty current of love and the consecration of his great, devoted heart. She was the master theme in all the voices the crowded years played in his soul. Without her he was nothing, one of thousands as brave and strong as he; with her he was a hero. The realization of that fact had kept her to her engagement. He had scarcely gone before she wished it broken. She hated herself for this. She condemned herself for what she called her weakness, not knowing that what she thought a woman's weakness in her heart was yet her strength after all.

Darrow was no less admirable than Peyton. True, he had not been compelled to make any such sacrifice

as the other had, but he had done what he conceived to be his duty with a direct simplicity that was admirable. He was handsomer, taller, stronger in a physical way, braver than the other—no, not braver, no man could be braver than Peyton. She wondered sometimes if Darrow would have had the moral courage to refuse her and act as Peyton had done, but that was an academic question.

But what of all this? It was nothing. If Darrow had been dowered with every faculty, possessed of every virtue, and if Peyton had none of these, she would have loved him just the same. Her passion had passed far beyond the calmly reasoning or reasonable stage; it took note only of facts, or rather of the one sublime fact that she loved him. Darrow's appeal had been most powerful to the physical side of her nature, and that side was growing more and more in abeyance in her developing life. If she could have seen him it might have been different; she might have realized the change in him.

Yet she was not ignorant of what he had done for, and through, her; how he had developed in love and war. And she was fearful what the consequences might be to him, and, if he were of value, to the South, if she should take away from him the stimulus of hope. Yet she had at last reached the point where she felt compelled to do so. As he loved her more he expected more from her; as she loved Peyton more she gave Darrow less and less.

Her heart had turned absolutely to Peyton. Saving her duty to the South, she was his. His absence, the

impossibility of their meeting, all conspired to produce the utter abandonment with which she gave way to her passion. She could not sit a single moment in the solitude of her chamber without thinking of him. She realized that if he ever stood again before her with his arms stretched out to her no power on earth should keep them apart—unless her duty to the South intervened. And even that duty would have to be overwhelming in its appeal to stay her movement toward him.

Her being went out to him more strongly when she learned inadvertently that he was an officer on one of the ships blockading the mouth of the bay, opposite Fort Morgan. Fate had as yet given him little opportunity for distinction; he was only a lieutenant, the watch officer of a frigate.

She sat in her room for long hours, her face leaning on her hands, staring through the window southward where he was. His nearness, while it did not make possible their meeting, had found her unable to disguise her longing to see him once more. His advent in the South had added the last stimulus to her heart. The fire and passion which had been repressed so long, burst out for him now. Sometimes with nervous hands she tore at her dress across her bosom as she walked restlessly to and fro in her room, at the thought of him, as if the heart that beat there were confined—as if it could not get out, and she must release it or die.

The overpowering of a great passion such as poets have dreamed of, such as historians have written of,

such as, given wider fields, has moved the world, was upon her. The thought of Peyton obsessed her, and her heart cried out to him with every beating. She trembled even at the most secret thought of his name. She was never so happy as when Mrs. Peyton, long since having disregarded her husband's injunctions, talked of him. The smallest detail of his life as his mother told over and over again the story of it, was as food to the craving of her soul.

The elder woman marked the revelation, and wondered, with a painful pity for poor Darrow and a mighty yearning for her eldest son, how it would all end. The grim old father, too, down on the ramparts of Fort Morgan, watched the fleet tossing to and fro on the long swells of the Gulf of Mexico and longed for a sight of the boy he had so loved, although he, at least, gave no outward sign.

But Mary Annan was heedless of Mrs. Peyton's observations. There was room in her heart for little but Peyton. Had he forgotten her? Had he forgiven her? Did he love her? Did he loathe her? Was his heart still hers? Had he given it to another? Had she crushed love out of him on that bitter day of rejection? Did devotion surge within his veins as in her own? She knew not, almost she cared not. Her feelings were too deep and overwhelming to depend upon reciprocation. Love was all, the future nothing.

In Mary Annan's waking hours she was afraid, afraid to think how much she loved Boyd Peyton. In the long nights she dreamed of him. She was his, that was

all; whether he claimed her or not, whether he knew it or not, she was his. Ah, loving God, how she prayed for him in every hour of her life! The South and he mingled in her petitions, and only that God who can read the holy mystery of a loving woman's heart knew which came first.

She would sit for long hours with her face in her hands in that familiar position, gazing to the southward, her breath coming quick, her color ebbing and flowing, her bosom heaving until she would stretch out her arms piteously to the southward as if to bridge the distance between them and offer him her heart. Sometimes they found her so, with a strange look on her face, a strange light in her eyes, a deep flush on her cheek, exalted, entranced.

Her feelings grew so strong at last that she came to the conclusion that she must tell Darrow. If it killed him he must know. Every letter she received in its trusting devotion impressed upon her that honor demanded that he should be told the truth. She did not love him. She never could love him. Marriage with him would be no sacrament, but a sacrilege. She honored him, she esteemed him; she would have given worlds to have felt differently. She had honestly tried to love him, but her heart had at last outleaped constraint. That was the naked truth.

She could not permit herself to deceive him longer, and so at last she poured out her heart to him in one long, broken appeal; telling him the whole truth, shaming herself, scorning herself, but asking her freedom. Not in the hope of marrying Peyton, either—

she was above the idea then and it was impossible anyway—but because honor and decency demanded that she tell Darrow the truth, and free herself and him from the bond which was certain to prove horrible to both of them in the end, since love only linked them half the way. It would be kinder to him after all. But kind or not it had to be; if it killed him and her, the word must be written.

In agony she penned the letter. There was no doubt in her mind as to the sincerity of Darrow's passion for her. She looked into her own heart and saw what he would suffer, and she suffered for and with him. The penalty, and the reward of a great passion is in the sympathy it begets with the suffering that always follows knowledge of the heart. She was dreadfully unhappy. But for Boyd Peyton she would have died.

The fateful letter had been sent to Darrow about the middle of September by the hand of Hamilton Pleasants, lieutenant-colonel, now if you please, commanding the old Alabama regiment. He had come back to recover from an attack of typhoid fever, after Gettysburg, and he had become bethrothed to Pink Peyton at the time.

The news had come that Longstreet's corps was hurrying from Virginia to reinforce Bragg's army then facing Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland on the mountains around Chattanooga. Though he was scarcely able to endure the fatigues and demands of active campaigning, Pleasants had hurried away to intercept his regiment and to take part in

the effort which was to be made to hurl the Federal troops out of Tennessee.

The peculiar feeling that precedes great events was in the air, and everyone waited with baited breath in expectation of the great battle impending. It was with sad hearts indeed that the two young women, Pink and Mary, bade the young man good-by. He carried the heart of one girl with him and in his pocket a letter which was to strike a mortal wound deep in the soul of his boyhood companion.

CHAPTER XXIV

WITH DARROW'S BRIGADE

EARLY in the afternoon of September 19, 1863, the first of the long troop trains clanked wearily into the station at Ringgold, Georgia. A young man in gray uniform, wearing the shoulder-straps of a lieutenant-colonel stood upon the platform, an expression of eagerness and anxiety on his thin, worn face as he gazed at the long line of ramshackly cars filled with gray-clad men. As the first soldier stepped from the train he rushed impetuously up to him with outstretched arms, shouting:

"Oh, Bob, Bob, I am so glad——"

The handsome face of Brigadier-General Robert Darrow, commanding the Alabama brigade of Hood's division of Longstreet's famous corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, broke into a broad smile as Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton Pleasants recovered himself with an embarrassed laugh, came to attention, saluted in the most formal manner, and remarked, with military precision:

"General, I report for duty, sir."

"Glad to see you, Ham," returned Darrow, genially, shaking the other warmly by the hand. "You ought not to be here, though. You are not well yet."

"Couldn't help it," said Pleasants; "I just had to come. I heard there was going to be fighting, and I wanted to head the old regiment once more."

"Well, you got here in the nick of time. Your regiment is on this section. Go and take command, and get the men out of the cars. They are in heavy marching order, and are to move forward at once."

Glad to be in active service once more, and eager to see his old comrades again, Pleasants, forgetting letters, messages, and everything else, saluted and ran toward the train, receiving a greeting of cheers from his soldiers as they recognized him.

"Mr. Ledyard," said the young general, turning to a staff officer, "you are to remain at the station and as fast as the other regiments of the brigade come in direct their colonels to get the men in line as quick as possible. I will rest the right of the brigade over there in that field. Ah, here comes someone looking for us," he added, as another staff-officer came riding down the road at a furious gallop, halted abruptly before him, dismounted, and saluted.

"General Darrow?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'm Colonel Thompson, of General Bragg's staff."

"Glad to meet you, Colonel."

"Thank you, the pleasure's mine," said Thompson. "As soon as your brigade is assembled, sir, you are to march up this road to the left toward Reed's Bridge,

over Chickamauga Creek, with all speed. General Hood's compliments and orders, sir."

"Very good, sir; how far is it to the army?"

"It's about ten miles, I reckon, and the general hopes you can get there this evening. There has been heavy fighting all morning. You are needed."

"We'll be there."

"It's a long march," said the colonel, dubiously.

"That's all right; I've got a brigade of foot cavalry here," laughed Darrow.

"Don't wait for anything, General," replied Thompson, laughing in turn. "Your men still have something left in their haversacks, I suppose?"

"They have enough for another meal, I reckon."

"That's well. Push them forward as fast as you can. Our losses have been severe, but we have forced the enemy back, and the battle is to be resumed in the morning."

"Has General Longstreet come?"

"Yes. He is with General Bragg now."

"Here comes the second section of my brigade," said Darrow, as another long train loaded with gray-coated soldiers pulled up on a siding.

"Good!"

"And the third will be along presently, I think."

"Fine! Jove, we're glad you're here. We've had a terrible time all day, but with your fresh veterans we ought to sweep everything before us to-morrow."

"Well, sir, we will do what we can," said Darrow. "My men have seen a deal of fighting, and we'll try to hold our end up."

"I know you will. The Army of Northern Virginia is all right, but we think down here that we don't have to take a back seat for anybody when it comes to fighting."

"You are right, Colonel, you don't," said Darrow, generously. "Oh, but it's good to be down here! I am nearer home than I have been for three years."

"You don't mean to tell me that you have never been back since you went to the front?"

"Never. I have stayed right in Virginia until I feel fairly sick for a sight of old Alabama."

"If we beat the Yanks to-morrow you will soon be on your native soil. Home!" continued Thompson, thoughtfully, surveying the passing regiments. "I am afraid that a great many of these fellows will never see it again."

"Yes, but that's a part of a soldier's risk," said Darrow, softly.

Before the troops moved off Darrow drew aside from his staff and beckoned Pleasants to come to him.

"We haven't had a moment alone, Ham," said the young brigadier to the younger colonel, "till now; but before we march off—you have just come from home. Did you see her?"

"I should say I did!" responded the junior officer, forgetting himself and lapsing into the old familiar style. "Bob, she is the sweetest and prettiest thing on earth, and I don't mind telling you that I am engaged to her."

"Good heavens!" gasped Darrow, turning pale. "What do you mean?"

"Oh, I mean Miss Pink Peyton, not—" returned the colonel, in much confusion.

"I see," greatly relieved. "I thought you meant Miss Mary."

"No, of course not," said the other.

"Of course not. Naturally you would not think anyone equal to Miss Peyton."

"Well, I—but I have a letter for you," said Pleasants, blushing furiously and fumbling in his jacket and bringing it forth. "I forgot all about it," he added, shamefacedly, letters from home being the things craved by the soldiers.

Darrow seized it eagerly in his gauntleted hands. For a second he made a motion as if to press it to his lips, and then, recollecting that the eyes of half his brigade were on him, he thrust it reluctantly in his pocket.

"How did she look? Was she well?" he asked.

"Beautiful!" said Pleasants, rapturously. "Oh, you mean Miss Mary? She looked very well indeed. Of course she is awfully cut up about the death of her father, and the war and all that, and you, too, I suppose, but otherwise she is quite well. I reckon she must be very fond of you, old fellow."

"I hope so," said the general, brightening in this vague assurance. "By the way, Pleasants, did you hear anything of Boyd Peyton while you were in Mobile?"

"Yes, he is in the blockading fleet down off Fort Morgan."

"Come to my head-quarters to-night," said the

general, "as soon as we have made camp, if we make any camp. I want to talk to you about home and Miss Mary."

"And Miss Pink," interrupted Pleasants.

"Yes, of course, before we go into battle to-morrow. It may be our last chance, you know."

By this time the platform and open space about the station were filled with soldiers from the two sections which had already arrived. Their uniforms were dusty and worn, sometimes tattered and patched, but their gun-barrels were bright, their rifles were looked to. They bore themselves with the careless *insouciance* of veterans as they fell into ranks with the promptness of trained soldiers. Their lean, brown, leather-tanned faces, their vigorous, easy movements, as well as their torn and tattered battle-flags, spoke in eloquent language of hard marches, long campaigns and fierce battles.

With rattle of drums and shrilling of fifes, in obedience to the sharp *staccato* commands of the officers rising above the confusion, they marched down the dusty road and aligned themselves in companies and regiments at the designated position. Mounting his horse, which, with the other horses, had been unloaded from the stock-cars in the front of the train, Darrow rode to the head of his brigade. The last section had arrived while the conversation had been going on, and, all the dispositions having been promptly made, a word of command put the troops in motion.

The Alabama regiment in which he had gone out as a major had mustered, on its departure from Mobile,

some eleven hundred officers and men. Now the entire force of the brigade, comprising four regiments and a battery of artillery, was scarcely more than fifteen hundred men. They were fifteen hundred, however, of the very best soldiers on the face of the globe, and Darrow looked back over the brown ranks tramping vigorously along the road in his wake, with pride which only those who have had under them devoted bodies of men can understand.

There, at the head of the column, rode the boyish Pleasants, commanding Darrow's own old regiment, now numbering about three hundred men. Where were the rest of them? Their bones lay bleaching upon battle-fields all over Virginia—Manassas, Malvern Hill, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville; yes, and far to the North some of them slept on the soil of Pennsylvania, around the slopes of Gettysburg. Now they were to show what Lee's veterans could do in the mountains and valleys of Georgia.

His particular regiment had no right to be there either. The term of their enlistment had expired. Had they chosen to do so, they could have gone directly home from Ringgold and been mustered out at Mobile without further fighting. But there was not a man who did not clamor for the dread opportunity of Chickamauga.

CHAPTER XXV

THE NIGHT BEFORE THE BATTLE

ALTHOUGH the brigade marched with a long swinging step that carried them forward rapidly, it was night when they reached the battle-field of that day and the morrow. This was a series of thickly wooded rolling hills, broken by short stretches of open country, pierced by many ravines and a few shallow brooks mostly gone dry, with here and there a dilapidated farm-house. As they crossed deep, steep-banked Chickamauga the brigade was halted to allow the men to wash their dusty faces and to fill their canteens from the muddy water of the turbid creek. Water was dreadfully scarce on that battle-field. The heavy acrid smell of powder hung over the field, and where the fighting had been severest, the sickly, nauseous taste of blood was in the heated air.

General Rosecrans had concentrated his forces between Chickamauga Creek and Missionary Ridge, a range of hills intervening between his rear and the town of Chattanooga, which was the objective point of the campaign. The Army of the Cumberland numbering at the beginning of the first day's fighting some

fifty-five thousand men, was stretched in a north and south line at the foot of the hills facing the Chickamauga, the left wing under General Thomas, covering the direct road to Chattanooga, which led through a pass in the mountains, called Rossville Gap. Immediately in the rear of his position was another road, the Dry Valley Road, also leading into Chattanooga through McFarland's Gap in the mountains. The Federal line was some five miles long.

Fronting the Union troops lay the Army of the Tennessee in slightly greater numbers, under General Braxton Bragg. The Confederate captain had crossed the Chickamauga and had endeavored to throw his right wing on the flank of his enemy, force him back from Rossville Gap, and interpose his army between Rosecrans and Chattanooga. The Confederates had attacked the Union left with their right, in great force. The Federal troops had been driven back from their first position during Saturday, September 19th, although they still held command of the Rossville and Dry Valley Roads, and Bragg so far had not succeeded in his plan. He determined, however, to continue the battle on the same lines the next morning.

Both armies had lost heavily during the hard fighting of the day. As we have seen, however, there came to Bragg in the very nick of time, a re-enforcement of an army corps sent by Lee from Virginia under the command of that peerless soldier James Longstreet, with such lieutenants as John B. Hood, and Lafayette McLaws, the first brigade of which arrived on the field on the evening of the 19th.

All night long the veterans of the famous corps came rolling down the road and were sent to their appointed positions. This with other re-enforcements raised Bragg's total for the two days' fighting to over seventy thousand troops; the bulk of them his own seasoned men who had fought from Shiloh to Stone River, and fit compeers for the others. The tired men munched their corn-bread from their haversacks and slept shelterless on the ground, where they could sleep at all. Solitary guns here and there in the opposing line sent shells at intervals screaming through the night, keeping all but the most indurated veterans nervously awake.

The woods and slopes were filled with killed and wounded men; and from the wounded, moans and screams, with piteous appeals for water, water, rose in mournful chorus over the field. The overworked exhausted surgeons and chaplains did what they could for them and so the long night wore away.

There was busy planning and counselling at both headquarters that night. Bragg divided his army into two wings. The right wing which was to attack Thomas's left and endeavor to outflank him, was put under the command of Leonidas Polk, the Right Reverend Bishop of Louisiana, who had been educated at West Point and had laid down the shepherd's crook to draw the warrior's sword. Under his command was the main body of the Army of the Tennessee. The left wing was committed to Longstreet with his own veterans and Simon Bolivar Buckner's corps, he who had shown his courage as a soldier at Fort

Donelson. The attack was appointed to begin at daybreak, and each commander was directed to put into it every last soldier he had in the end.

Rosecrans, a far-seeing strategist, had fully divined his antagonist's purpose. Indeed the heavy attacks previously thrown upon his left would have indicated the plan to the most indifferent soldier. He had therefore strengthened his left at the expense of his right. He knew of course that he was heavily outnumbered, but he was confident of winning; his confidence was shared by his corps and division commanders and by every soldier in the army. Rosecrans was ignorant of the arrival of re-enforcements to the enemy, but it would have made no difference if he had known it. He had to fight where he was, and he was willing and anxious to do so.

The mainstay of the Union army was General George H. Thomas, who had command of the left wing, situated at a place called Kelley's Field. The troops under his command busied themselves during the night, so far as time, darkness, and the lack of implements permitted, in throwing up a slight breastwork of rails in front of them. The supply trains of both armies were in the rear of the various positions, and the men generally breakfasted on what cold food remained in their haversacks. Many of them had little or nothing.

At daybreak a low mist, or fog, covered the ground which prevented either army from making a move. Finally toward half after nine, the mist cleared a little and the attack began.

CHAPTER XXVI

SMASHING THROUGH THE UNION LINE

AT nine o'clock on the morning of the 20th of September, 1863, the tree-clad hills in front of General Thomas's position between Chickamauga Creek and Missionary Ridge, covering the road through Rossville Gap to Chattanooga, were suddenly covered with men who seemed to have sprung up by magic, as they rose from the hollows in which they had lain concealed. The instant crackling of the rifles and muskets of the heavy skirmish-line thrown in advance of the battle-line soon gave place to crashing volleys punctured by the deeper roar of cannon as the Southern batteries swung front into action, pouring their grape, shrapnel, and canister into their enemies. It seemed to the Union soldiers that scarcely a moment elapsed between the appearance and the advance of the Confederates. With consummate courage the gray masses were moved forward in the smoke and hurled upon the Federal line, and with equal courage the assault was met. The battle raged up and down the Union left with terrific fierceness, and with no present advantage as yet to either side.

Presently out of the smoke and dust, far to the Union left, Breckinridge's division, overlapping Thomas's shorter line by a long distance, swung around across the Rossville Road and attacked the Union line in reverse. But no better soldier, no harder fighter, than the great Virginian ever handled an army. Quick to take in the significance of the dangerous movement, Thomas threw his reserve brigades in fierce countercharge right into the face of Breckinridge, and, aided by a timely re-enforcement of one of Negley's brigades—although the whole division should have been there and was not—he forced him back from the road and retained control of it.

Again and again Polk forged a mighty battle hammer of human bodies and drove it against the Union left, which shivered and vibrated under the terrific blows rained upon it. The two wings charged and recharged across the disputed ground. Positions were taken and retaken again and again. The armies were locked in a mighty, death-like grip of battle—a writhing, twisting embrace of furious, swaying conflict.

Meanwhile the front of Thomas's command was so heavily engaged that he did not dare to weaken it to help his hard-pressed left flank by a withdrawal of a single regiment. The absence of Negley's division, or the missing two-thirds of it, which had been promised, so seriously jeoparded his position as to render it almost impossible for him to hold it in the face of such continuous and desperate attacks. Messenger

after messenger came to Rosecrans asking reinforcement.

The right of the Union army had so far only been engaged in a desultory way that morning. The fighting as yet had all been on the left. The necessity for moving his right wing by the left flank was imperative, and the movement was at once begun by the Union general. This is always a difficult evolution in front of an enemy, and when the battle is in actual course the difficulties are increased a thousandfold. As the morning wore on the Confederate attack was extended from left to right with gradually increasing force. Bragg divined Rosecrans's purpose, and he endeavored to make him maintain his lines, and so prevent detachment to the left, which he hoped to overwhelm. At any rate, he determined to strike the Union troops moving to reinforce Thomas on their unprotected flanks, as they passed.

Still, the fighting on the Federal right was as yet by no means severe, although the demonstrations of the Confederates were growing stronger with every moment, and their troops were being moved forward on the right for a general action all along the line. By half after eleven o'clock a misunderstood order, which was at the same time badly expressed, withdrew a whole Federal division from its place in the line near the centre, moved it to the left, and placed it in the rear of Thomas's heavily assailed position. There was a great hole opened in the Union line. John B. Hood, one of the most magnificently reckless fighters in the Southern army, detected it through his skir-

mishers. The news was at once carried to Longstreet, and he massed his corps for an instant attack, appreciating the brilliancy of the opportunity before him.

With masterly tactics Longstreet threw his veterans into a column of brigades at half distance, Hood leading the column in person. With fixed bayonets and at a double-quick they moved down past a little farmhouse which from the name of its owner gave the title to the Brotherton Road. The men in the open flanks of the Union army on either side of this vast chasm were completely exposed to the Confederate avalanche, pouring into the gap in solid column, the fierce rebel yell, first heard from the lips of John Sevier, one hundred years before in Tennessee, ringing over the field. At the same instant every battery of Southern artillery opened fire. Buckner's corps hurled itself upon the attenuated Union lines on the right of the opening, Stewart's division on the left of it, at the same time Longstreet pierced the centre.

The Federal General Davis threw his two brigades heroically upon this mighty gray column. A few swift volleys from the advancing Confederates shattered their ranks, and when the division fell upon them with the bayonet they drove them like leaves in a winter storm. The Union batteries in the rear of the line sent canister and grape tearing and ripping through the advancing battalions; but their blood was up, nothing could stop their irresistible advance. Davis's men, taken in front and rear and flying for their lives, burst into the ranks of Phil Sheridan's oncoming division,

throwing them into hopeless confusion, in which condition the gray battle storm surged down upon them. In spite of the heroic efforts of that commander they were thrown into complete rout and swept away in mad disorder. Brigadier-General Lytle, the poet-soldier, was killed in front of his brigade, vainly striving to rally his shattered disorganized troops and hold his lines.

While this terrible catastrophe was happening Buckner's soldiers, advancing with equal valor, fell upon the remainder of the right-centre wing of the Union army and drove it before them in hopeless and inextricable disorganization. Men, guns, horses, and wagons, in a chaos of confusion, streamed back from the battle-line, and were scattered through the woods and down the Dry Valley Road toward McFarland's Gap. Some of them were halted on the other side of the ridge, at Rossville, but many did not stop until they reached Chattanooga.

Into this flying mass the Confederate guns poured shot and shell. The Union batteries were captured and turned against their own men. Rosecrans, the commander-in-chief, McCook, Davis, Sheridan, and Crittenden, protesting, cursing, imploring, raging, beseeching, were swept along with the rest in a mad, tumultuous rout. The Union right wing had been hammered to pieces. The Union line had been riven in two, and one side of it crushed like a house of cards beaten down by a hammer. And it had all happened in a few moments.

Far to the left Thomas and his battalions, ignorant

of the disaster, still stood fighting with desperate valor. Longstreet now turned his men toward that flank and what was left of the Union centre, and repeated with great success his attack on the right. The Union troops were slammed backward like a door. Hood was desperately wounded, and Longstreet led his lines in person, Bushrod Johnson's brigade in advance. The Union troops in the centre made a better resistance and somewhat delayed the advance. They changed front under fire and clung tenaciously to their new line, facing the gap and the victory-flushed foe. But they too had to give way before the furious dash and overwhelming onslaught of the victorious Confederates, now in greatly superior force, until finally there was nothing left of the Union line but the still heavily assaulted left wing.

CHAPTER XXVII

"THE ROCK OF CHICKAMAUGA"

THERE was now a lull in the battle on the right. The fierce charge and countercharge were intermitted. Longstreet was reforming his men, preparing to sweep Thomas from the field. So, too, there was a momentary respite from the attacks to which the Union left had been subjected all morning. The two exhausted armies rested where they were for a breathing space ere they renewed the action. Thomas took advantage of this respite to withdraw his troops to the rear to a more favorable defensive position. There was a semicircular hill back of Kelley's Field, called by many on account of its shape The Horseshoe, and by others Snodgrass Hill, from the home of a small farmer which stood on the top of it. A spur of Missionary Ridge extending out to the eastward, it rises about one hundred feet above the surrounding country. Its top is undulating and broken. Some distance to the westward, in the rear of its crest, there is a shallow ravine beyond which rise other hills, one ridge in particular running east and west and commanding The Horseshoe. It was thickly wooded and in places very steep. As it covered both the Rossville

and Dry Valley Roads, Thomas determined to re-establish his line there.

The troops as they retreated up the slopes were thrown around the crest of the hill and preparations made for another series of assaults to be expected. Firing on the right had not yet been resumed, and Thomas, ignorant of the disaster, having received no word, fancied this to mean the Rebels had been repulsed, and had given over the attack. He confidently expected reinforcements and fought on, eagerly looking for the hoped-for succor. He did not know that he was left alone with his four divisions to fight the whole Confederate army.

Presently a cloud of dust rising above the tree-tops indicated a body of men approaching Snodgrass Hill from the right. Hoping, praying, that it was Sheridan's division coming to his assistance, Thomas directed a staff-officer to ride down and make sure of it. The soldier came back at full gallop and reported that he did not think it was Sheridan's division, but the troops of the enemy.

Surprised beyond measure and scarcely able to credit the astounding tidings, Thomas yet acted in the emergency with promptness. He threw one of his brigades forward with instructions to feel the advancing troops, attack them immediately and stop them if they were enemies. Soon the quick rattle of musketry apprised him that the supposition of the staff-officer was correct. He was still ignorant of the magnitude of the catastrophe, but he realized that something terrible must have happened to permit the

enemy to approach so near his right and rear. He deemed them to be in great force, too, from the rapid annihilation of the brigade that he had thrown forward, which made a splendid fight before it was wiped out. To meet this new danger Thomas hurriedly extended his lines to the right and rear along the edge of the hill, occupying the position at first by a single Ohio regiment, and reinforcing it by stragglers from different divisions, who began drifting into his lines in considerable numbers from the routed right. Each one brought a tale of defeat and disaster which might well have appalled the stoutest heart.

It did not take Thomas many minutes to surmise that he was left with a fraction of the Union troops to hold Snodgrass Hill in the face of the whole Confederate army. If he gave way, if he retreated or were driven from that field, the Army of the Cumberland would be irretrievably ruined, routed, smashed, battered to pieces, destroyed.

To give way never entered his head for a moment. Disposing his troops as best he could and putting every last man he could gather up in position, he determined to stand where he was and hold the hill until, as one of his subordinates expressed it, "they went to heaven from it."

The expected attack was not long in coming. Sweeping forward with resistless force, excited and stimulated by their tremendous successes of the morning, Longstreet's veterans hurled themselves upon the hill. Again and again the gray deluge came rolling up the slope as a mighty wave assaults a rocky shore.

Again and again they were beaten back by the wall of fire which ringed its crest. The continuous rattle of the musketry was like the rolling of a mighty drum. It was scarcely possible on either side to use artillery to much advantage, and the men fought it out in hand-to-hand attacks mainly, with small-arms.

Sometimes when the desperate gray ranks perilously neared the crest a countercharge with fixed bayonets drove them, after horrible struggles, down the hill. The carnage was frightful. The slopes were soon covered with dead and dying. There was no water to be had, no food, no rest, no respite even. It was fight, fight, fight, God! until the brain reeled. The hill ran with blood. There was a little pond on the field. Divisions fought for it, wounded men and horses struggled to it, buried their heads in the sickening bloody water—drank and died.

The heat was terrific. The dry trees and underbrush caught fire here and there from the rifle-blasts. The smoke hung low over the hill. Men's forms appeared through it in ghastly yellow outlines. The flashes of the rifles and guns pierced the murky clouds with long lances of flame.

The yelling and cheering continuously rose and fell as the charge and countercharge set the men against each other, and throughout the chaotic tumult might be heard the piteous cries of the wounded, cries of anguish, cries for water, water, water! And none could help them. No man could be spared from the fighting lines on either side! The men were there to kill, not to save; to destroy, not to help.

The field swam redly before the eyes of the fighters. Drunk with battle, they moved like men in some hideous dream, striking where they fancied they saw a breast holding a heart come bursting upon them out of the smoke; pouring shot at short range into masses of men; reeling in awful grapple to and fro, up and down, on that terrible hill. War, war, war, in its glory, its majesty, its awful appalling horror, was there!

There were no reserve troops which could be used to strengthen the weak parts of the Union line. The men stood where they were and fought it out as best they could. Thomas rode from flank to centre, from centre to flank, and held the place with iron resolution, while Longstreet and Polk threw themselves upon it with headlong valor.

As fresher troops arrived from the Confederate left, where they were no longer needed since there were no enemies left before them, they were extended on the left of Longstreet's columns to menace Thomas's right and rear. Across the ravine was that high ridge, which overlooked the hill. The quick eye of Longstreet, after the futility of his first assaults had been demonstrated, saw that this ridge was the key to the position. If he could seize it and hold it with his guns he could send his men through the sheltered ravine and take the thin Union line in reverse. He could extend opposite either flank of it, or the centre, and no soldiers that ever lived could hold that position then.

Thomas had been equally quick, in the varying

phases of the battle, to detect the vital importance of the ridge to the position on which he was making his last stand, but he was helpless to seize it. He had not a single soldier that he could put on it. His men were fighting with the energy and courage of despair. His attenuated lines were liable to be pierced at half a dozen points at any moment. To withdraw a regiment, a company, a man, would leave a hole which could only be filled by the enemy.

He began to despair at last, but there was nothing that he could do but hold on as he was. He had heard nothing from Rosecrans yet. He could hope for no reinforcements now. If Longstreet seized that ridge it would be good-by to them. Thomas knew that his opponent was too good a soldier not to make the attempt. Well, they had fought a good fight, they had made a splendid defence. As long as men lived it would never be forgotten. And they could at least die on the field they had hallowed with their valor. These were his final thoughts, but it was with anguish unspeakable that he saw the preparations being made to occupy the ridge.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"TOWARD THE SOUND OF THE CANNON"

AWAY off on Ringgold Road three small brigades of the Union army, under Major-General Gordon Granger, lay on their arms around McAffee Church, on that dreadful Sunday morning. Far to the right of them from the deep woods enshrouding the battlefield, the roar of the conflict trembled up through the air. They had been placed on that road to cover any possible attack on the far left, with instructions to remain there until ordered away. No enemy was near them, and it seemed evident that none was likely to approach them.

As the sound of the battle grew deeper and fiercer, as its thunder rolled back and forth in ever-increasing detonation over the hills, the commander of the corps, chafing impatiently at this inaction, determined at last to advance toward the fighting. Disregarding his orders, on his own motion about noon he started for Thomas's position. Leaving one brigade to hold the road, the men marched rapidly through the heat and dust toward the sound of the cannon.

Avoiding bodies of cavalry skirmishing in this direc-

tion, by leaving the road and plunging through the woods, the troops came swiftly on. As they advanced they saw evidences of the disintegration of the army —panic-stricken fugitives, wounded soldiers, abandoned wagons, broken guns, terrified men, weaponless regiments, masterless horses, the shattered remains of a routed army, surging toward Rossville, stopping for nothing. Directing the division commander, General Steedman, to come forward at the quickest possible speed, Granger with his staff galloped ahead toward Snodgrass Hill, which he could see through the trees, blazing like a volcano, smoking like a furnace, shaking like an earthquake, roaring like a tornado.

Thomas had seen the clouds of dust raised in the dry air by the approaching troops. What could that mean? Who could they be? Had the Confederates got to the rear of that long-assailed left flank at last? Was he to be completely surrounded and annihilated on that ghastly hill? His relief, therefore, when he learned that the on-coming troops were the men of Rosecrans's reserve corps, can scarcely be imagined. The new troops as they neared the hill came forward on the run. By God's providence they reached the place about two o'clock just as the advance of Hindman's division of Longstreet's corps deployed on the crest of the ridge and began filling the ravine back of the hill.

A word or two put Granger in possession of the situation. Without stopping for breath even, Steedman was ordered to take the hill and drive the Confederates out of the pass. If they had come a moment

later Longstreet's men would have established themselves there, and that would have been an end of Thomas's troops. But they had arrived at the very crucial moment. Steedman was on horseback. Seizing a regimental flag, he put himself at the head of his men and gave the order to charge. Thomas and Granger rode forward to superintend and observe. The bullets whistled about them. Steedman was wounded, his horse was shot, and he was pitched forward in the *mêlée*, his two brigadiers went down, but still the shouting soldiers kept on. Down the ravine and up the hill they poured in an irresistible torrent.

For twenty minutes pandemonium reigned. The passions of hell were let loose. At the end of that time the hill was gained, the ravine cleared, and over two thousand men in blue and gray lay dead and dying on its slopes. They had saved the army. The battle all around the circle had not been intermitted a moment during this episode either. And now the ammunition of Thomas's men was almost expended. But Granger's men shared theirs with their comrades, and there was a slight lull in the conflict again after this repulse of the attempt to take the ridge, while both sides prepared for its renewal.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE LAST CHARGE

LONGSTREET, keeping up his fire on the hill, sent to Bragg for reinforcements to make another attack, and was informed that every available man was already in the battle-line.

Thomas's position could not be outflanked. He must be driven from it by direct assault or not at all. Longstreet had one small division. Preston's, of Buckner's corps, in reserve which had not yet been heavily engaged. At the front of it, to strengthen it, he put Darrow's brigade. His men had waited their turn with the philosophy of veterans who knew that the day could not pass without their being poured into that smelting furnace of death and destruction. They had moved forward in the wake of the grand assaulting column, and were now drawn up just out of range from the hill under the trees. At the head of the brigade rode Pleasants with what was left of his Alabamians.

Longstreet called General Preston to him and pointed out the necessity of capturing the hill. No fewer than five desperate assaults between noon and

that hour, five o'clock, had already been made on that hill. Each succeeding one had risen higher on the slope, got nearer to the crest, than the others; and their course might have been marked by the lines of dead, the hill being so covered with bodies that its natural surface was scarcely discernible. This was the last supreme effort. If it failed there could be no more assaults on that hill that day.

That instinctive feeling for a crisis, that premonition of danger, which goes to make a great leader, led Thomas to expect, and, in so far as he could, prepare for this final effort. As he detected the ranks of the enemy being deployed under the smoke-filled trees, he rode along the lines to encourage his men for one last stand. Even after stripping the cartridge-boxes of the dead he found that they had scarcely an average of three rounds of ammunition left per man. He cautioned them to withhold their fire until it would tell the most, and when they had exhausted their cartridges, to charge the advancing troops with the bayonet, to give them the cold steel. Faint, weary, hungry, thirsty, oh, God, terribly thirsty, the heroic men sent up a hoarse cheer as they heard his words, or saw him ride calm and collected amidst the storm. They drew in their belts, looked to their muskets and bayonets, and determined that the end would find them dead or alive, as it might chance, but in any event in their places in the ranks. The wounded who were able to handle a rifle joined their unhurt comrades on the battle-line.

Darrow and the field-officers, after a few words to

their men, dismounted from their horses and without further preliminaries took up the advance, Longstreet and the rest looking painfully on. The troops came forward in long lines. They stepped out deliberately at first, keeping their dress on the flags, and then more rapidly at the double-quick.

There was a grim, set look on Darrow's face as he led them toward the hill. He had been stricken to the heart by Mary Annan's letter, which he had read by the light of a camp-fire that night, and he cared nothing whatever for any bodily mischance that might befall him. Indeed, he would have welcomed a shot to strike him down. Everything had gone out of his life with her words except his duty as a soldier. Pleasants, in command of the first regiment, kept near him as they advanced. Such a look of desperate determination commingled with reckless indifference, and heartbroken anguish, he had never seen on a man's face. In spite of the engrossing nature of the task before him he could scarcely keep his eyes from Darrow.

As the men reached the foot of the slope they burst into loud yells and cheers, and dashed at it in a wild run. It was so thick with bodies dead and living that they were forced to trample ruthlessly upon them, silent or shrieking, as they advanced. The hill was slippery with blood, they found, as they struggled up its steep sides.

The crest was strangely silent for the moment. Could it be that the Federal troops had withdrawn? They would soon find out. At command the front

rank fired a volley, and dropping to its knees was passed by the second rank, which ran a little distance farther and fired, and then by the other rank, which did the same thing. So shifting and weaving back and forth they climbed up and up. By this time they were near the crest and still no answer came from the men they hoped to sweep before them.

Ah, there it was at last. Trumpet calls rang out. Flags were suddenly lifted. Now the crest was filled with men. The two forces were so near each other they could peer into the faces opposite. Some of the men on the hill were laughing like maniacs, some yelling frantically, some were silent and awe-stricken, some stood with lips drawn back from the teeth as a snarling dog at bay, some were indifferent, some pale, some flushed, their faces engorged with blood. Back of them officers on horseback rode near the edge. There was Thomas himself, silent, stern, impassive, determined.

The advancing troops had time but for a single glance, and the hill was crested with flame again. A stream of bullets poured down the slope which swept them away in scores. The assaulting column returned the withering fire as best they could, still wavering on. Again it was repeated. Finally every other man in that first brigade was shot down. The survivors halted and stood there unable to go forward, too proud to go back. It was such a fire as no mortal man apparently could withstand, yet such was the magnificent valor of those troops that when Darrow, looking the desperate hero he was, tore the colors of his old regi-

ment from the hand of a color-bearer and sprang to the front the men with bayonets at charge leaped after him. The third volley the last for many, rang out. The head of the column was blown to pieces. It was riddled like a sieve, torn to rags, but it came on still. A bullet struck Darrow in the breast and tore through his lungs. He wavered.

"Save the flag," he cried to Pleasants, who was next him, and then he pitched violently forward on his face.

The blue troops on the hill were coming now. With fixed bayonets they came pouring down the slope. The roar of the musketry died away as the two lines met and was succeeded by the ringing of steel on steel and the shouts and struggles of the men. A little handful of his own men rallied around Pleasants and his flag. He cut down two or three who came in touch with his weapon, and stoutly strove to hold his ground, but to little avail. The scattering discharges and the fierce onset delivered from above slowly swept the scattered division down the hill. Pleasants turned, gathered the flag to his breast, and followed the remnants of his men. He had stood there on that line until he had been left alone. Those who had rallied around him had been killed at his feet. The staff and flag were spattered with blood. He could do no more. They were beaten back. They had failed. Only duty remained. He would save that old hallowed battle-riven banner.

A scattering fire pursued the retreating Confederates down the hill. One bullet struck Pleasants in the ankle. He fell, and the flag pitched forward.

With superhuman resolution he dragged himself to his feet again, picked up the flag, staggered a few painful steps, dropped to his knees, and crawled down the hill. A few of the troops above who had cartridges left levelled their pieces at him, but the colonel in immediate command of the troops nearest him, filled with admiration for Pleasants's courage, ordered his men to cease firing. The attack was over. It had failed. Let the crawling hero save his flag.

As the man in gray crawled, rolled, fell down the hill the Union officer ran toward the prostrate form of the Confederate who had led the gallant advance. He was nearest of any others to the crest. He was lying prone with his body slightly lifted on his left arm. His set face was ghastly pale. His right hand was fumbling at his breast. As the Federal officer approached him by a violent effort he drew a letter from his pocket, a blood-stained, crumpled letter.

"Free!" he murmured, as the Union colonel knelt by him. "Tell Mary——"

There was a gush of blood from his lips. He dropped shudderingly down on his face.

At the foot of the hill Pleasants fainted from pain and exhaustion. But the men of his regiment found the flag tightly clasped in his hand. Two hundred of them who had answered the roll-call of that morning had been stricken down in that holocaust of death, on that hill of hell. Seventy per cent. had gone in that last mad, terrible assault.

There was no more fighting that night. Under orders from Rosecrans, Thomas withdrew with but

"Save the flag," he cried to Pleasants.

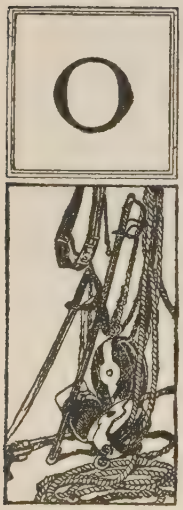
little additional loss through Rossville Gap toward Chattanooga after dark. Bragg had won a great victory, but he had paid a fearful price for it. Over twenty thousand, or about thirty per cent., of his troops had fallen. In Longstreet's corps alone the loss had been over forty per cent., and there were dozens of regiments in both armies whose losses had exceeded fifty per cent.

The Confederates had driven the Union army from the field, a large part of it in hopeless rout. Thomas's determined stand had saved the Union army from entire annihilation. Well did men style the great Virginian thereafter "The Rock of Chickamauga."

And nowhere upon this continent before or since was there seen such desperate fighting as had ranged around the horseshoe slopes of Snodgrass Hill. There was little to choose between either army. Both on that awful day had risen to the highest measure of the stature of American manhood and valor. And sixteen thousand men in blue were left on the field.

CHAPTER XXX

THE RELIEF THAT SHAMED



ON Monday, the 21st of September, the first report of the battle reached Mobile. A brief telegram told of the result of the action, but gave no details. The air, however, was thick with rumors of the most extravagant and exaggerated kind and as variable as they were frequent. This gossiping method of transmitting information from hand to mouth, as it were, was prevalent in those days of meagre facilities for communication, and was popularly known as the "grapevine telegraph."

The women of Mobile had waited for too many bulletins from battlefields to experience anything novel in the way of sensation on that day and the succeeding ones. There were many who had scanned lists of killed, wounded, and missing, in the regiments for the names of loved ones, who would do so no longer. To many of them had come the miserable certainty that their interest in the welfare of the regiment was no longer personal. But there remained still a goodly number who watched for the return of the casualties in the old regiment, with heart-tearing anxiety that deepened and deepened.

However, as more and more ghastly details of the horrors of that awful slaughter and carnage filtered through the rumors in the brief infrequent telegrams, the greater became the anxiety. What wonder that women sickened and failed under the strain? With added information came the certainty that the old regiment had suffered severely again. Who were left? Who were taken this time? Questions like these quivered on every lip in the suspense. Yet there was a strange feeling of pride that mingled with their anxiety; abstractly they would not have had it otherwise, they gloried in the record of the regiment even when its losses came desperately home to them in personal bereavements. But no complete lists of killed and wounded came, they never came from that army.

No private communications from anyone in the regiment reached the city for some time, and it was not until ten days afterward that personal details began to appear in the despatches. Then Mary Annan learned with a singular mixture of feelings in which anguish and remorse largely predominated, that General Darrow who had headed the last charge had been shot and was among the missing.

I say a singular mixture, for if ever woman sincerely mourned for a man and would have called him back at any sacrifice, she was that one; if ever grief and regret entered a woman's soul because of death, it had entered Mary Annan's because the man to whom she had engaged herself, from whom she had begged her freedom, had been wiped out on that terrible field; and yet in spite of herself—and she loathed herself for

the thought, she would have died rather than have admitted it openly—there was a leap of strange joy in her heart at the same time.

Not joy that he was killed, oh, no, but joy that, he being killed, she was free. There was the selfishness as well as the magnificence of a great passion! He was gone, and her heart quivered with anguish and despair and torture, at the thought of it. Yet she could not still that voice that whispered to her soul, free, free! The word, if she had known it, which Darrow had spoken, free, free! She gloried in his achievement, in his character; she mourned for him, she would have given all to call him back, but there was this mighty fact in her conscience, his going had made her free! The last check that had estopped her passion for Peyton was gone, the last barrier that intervened between them had been removed. She could love him—ah, she had always done that—but she could love him now without accusation, without restraint. And she could love him with hope! Her love began to take thought for itself in the freedom of her release. She began to see that possibly in some way he might be given back to her again.

Yet her soul revolted from this situation. Her mind raged against it. She vowed over and over again in the turmoil of her thoughts that she would give up everything, even her love for Peyton, her hope of happiness, to call back the dead soldier; which was not true—or was it after all? She tried to persuade herself that she had repented that she had asked her freedom, and that was true—but only because being

killed there had been no need after all. She sorrowed that Darrow had gone to his death with her denial of her love ringing in his ear. Almost she loved him, too, now that he was gone beyond recall, and could not claim her. And she was sincere in all this. There was a duality in her feelings, strange, confused, inexplicable. She meant it when she thought these things, yet deep down in her secret heart was that overwhelming consciousness of freedom; and that sense she had to take cognizance of, she had to recognize it, look it in the face.

She visited upon herself for this situation all the contempt that her pride of race and cause rendered inevitable; and the poignant censure that her honor demanded, but it was no use, and finally she knew it was no use. She would rather have perished in torture a thousand times than allow anyone to know of this, yet she had to acknowledge it herself, the fact rose before her. When she wept bitter tears—and if she really loved him that solace for woman would have been denied her—it was partly for the soldier who had gone, partly for the loss of her self-respect involved in this revelation of her feelings, partly because of the hopeless love she cherished for Peyton, her enemy, and her conqueror, and partly because of joy that, no matter how it was brought about, she was free.

She would have arranged matters differently, if her will had not been bound by her feelings. It was not in accord with her code, these conclusions to which she finally came, but she was to learn—nay, she had learned indeed—that love was stronger than death, or

life, or gratitude, or country; that it could bow to nothing but duty, and honor. And she could not be sure that it would bow to duty in her case, if the supreme test came. At least she was sure of one desire or rather determination. Though her heart might break she resolved to give no sign of her feeling for Peyton to anyone.

She was wearing mourning already for her father and there was no other outward way in which she could further testify to her grief at the loss of her soldier lover. The betrothal of course had been made public, and the hardest part of the situation she found in the visits of condolence which were made to her by her old friends. She could not be sure how far she assented to these expressions of sympathy. She hated herself furiously for not feeling as she ought. There was no doubt as to her grief, but it was largely selfish, sorrow for her own thoughts. Outwardly, however, it served one purpose in that she presented such evidences of misery that when her friends noticed it with loving sympathy, she felt that she was a base hypocrite for not telling the truth. Yet in all this her grief for Darrow was really deep and sincere too.

She had told no one about the broken engagement, and she was fearful, now that he had been killed, lest anyone should find it out. She prayed that Pleasants might not have been able to deliver her letter. She longed earnestly with a feverish activity of mind that she might see him. If heaven were kind to her it might be that the letter had arrived too late and Darrow had gone to his death secure in her love. He

would know now that it had been denied him, but perhaps he would not care now.

Stop! Was he really dead? Had he been killed? It was reported that he had been shot in front of the Federal line, and was missing, but that was all. There was no report of his body being found among the killed. When this idea came to her she was filled with a new set of distracting emotions. If he had not received her letter and he had not died, what then? This public demonstration of sorrow and grief which others thought was for him, an opinion in which she was quietly acquiescing—what would be the result of it, if after all, he had survived his wound? Could she ever give him the letter or tell him the truth, if he did come back ignorant of it? Could she keep to her engagement then? Could she break it? Could she marry him? What could she do? Was she indeed free or bound?

And there was Peyton tossing about on the sunlit sea at the mouth of the bay, so near her, yet so parted from her. She could feel his presence. She had doubted, but she felt now in her secret heart that he loved her. Such feeling as hers could not be without response. She would compel him to love her wherever he might be, whatever he might do, however they were separated—if she were only free.

She pictured Peyton on the deck of the ship staring over the waters to where she sat for long hours alone, in that cheerful Southern room, leaning her face upon her hands in the old way. Alone with him, alone with love. She was completely unsettled, swept away from

her moorings by the intensity of her feelings. Her standards were broken. Her ideas of love, honor, duty, confused. There was but one thing of which she was sublimely certain, and that was that she loved Peyton, she loved him, she loved him with deepening feeling in every passing moment!

Yes, Darrow rose before her vision in all his splendid manly beauty. She saw him as she had often seen him, she pictured him bursting through the smoke and flame of battle, his mighty arm lifted up carrying the starry Southern cross she loved so well. She saw the red blood welling over his worn, tattered, gray uniform when he fell. The world, her world, rang with plaudits for him. If he had died he had died as the heroes die, fronting the foe. If he had been laid low he had been struck down as the soldier should be in the thick of the conflict. If his spirit had gone it had left him at the supreme moment of life, at the height of the charge.

Why could she not love him? What was she that she could not lift up her heart in thanksgiving that God had given her the love of such a man, that she had been in fact the inspiration of this magnificent heroism and courage and devotion? Why, now that he was gone, could she not forever wear the garments of mourning instead of shrouding herself in the skirts of shame because she was free? Why was it that in every splendid picture the dark face of Peyton, grim, stern, forbidding, the face of an enemy, rose and shattered her dreams? By and by she could see nothing but Peyton, Peyton, Peyton, everywhere. She was

no longer mistress of her heart, her will, anything. That belonged to the man on the ship. There was rest and peace in the abandonment. There was dignity in the greatness of her passion which half took away the shame.

And poor Pink Peyton, her grief was genuine and unalloyed. The first tidings had said that Pleasants had died by Darrow's side. The shock had crushed the girl, then she had been lifted up to the seventh heaven by a contradictory report, and beaten down again by the rumor of a desperate wound he had received in carrying back the colors to the regiment. These alternations were more terrible than mere suspense—there was always hope to leaven that.

And then every heart was fired with excitement when it was clicked over the wires that the regiment—all that was left of it, having been literally cut to pieces —its time of service having expired, was coming home. Pleasants was to be brought back with the rest.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RETURN OF THE REGIMENT

IT was a pleasant morning in October when the steamer from Montgomery drew up at the wharf with the regiment on board. There was a great concourse of people on the dock and in the nearby streets. Two or three companies of young boys and old men, Home Guards, in cheap, ill-fitting uniforms, were there to welcome them, and there was a regiment from General Maury's command at the Spanish Fort at Blakely, to do them honor. The rest of the crowd was made up of hoary grandfathers, little children, and women. The troops on the shore presented arms as the debarkation of the regiment began.

A regiment! Was that handful a regiment? A faint attempt to raise a cheer ended in a groan. First came the lieutenant in command, a mere boy, who had been a private when he went forth. There were tears in his eyes, he stepped unsteadily, his sword trembled in his hands, his voice broke as he gave the words of command. Close after him came a little squad of men carrying the flag, a mere tattered, bloodstained rag,

now, drooping down the staff in the still air. Then on a litter, carried by some of the soldiers, came the prostrate figure of young Pleasants, the heroic lieutenant-colonel. His foot was bandaged, and the wound and exposure had brought on a relapse of his fever. He had strength enough left to prop himself upon his arm and turn his gaze listlessly toward the crowd.

Then came the wounded who were able to march—men with their heads tied up, men with their arms in improvised slings, men leaning on human crutches, men with bandages over their eyes, led by others; and then the well men—only by contrast could these haggard, broken fellows be called well—perhaps one hundred of them. The whole body did not number one hundred and fifty. Their patched, tattered uniforms were covered with dust, they were worn and faded beyond recognition. The faces of the men were gaunt and weather-beaten, but the gun-barrels were bright, the bayonets still sparkled in the sun. They had gone forth not quite three years before some eleven hundred strong, they came back one hundred and fifty weak.

A drum and fife belonging to them struck up as the little company, in the midst of ghastly silence, crossed the gang plank. The remains of the field music made a brave effort to cheer the men, and the tune that rang over the silent crowd was the old sweet one, "Listen to the Mocking-Bird." The two men played a few bars of it, but it was too much for them. The music stopped suddenly.

The heads of the men of the regiment dropped on their breasts as the memories of their first passage

down Government Street, the day they went away, so young, so hopeful, and so strong, came upon them, staggering over the same highway on that day. Tears streamed from their eyes. They were home, all that was left of them. It was good to be home again. A groan burst from the crowd. The regiment proceeded slowly a little way up the street, the people swarming about it.

There, on the porch at Annandale, as they had seen her as they marched away, stood Mary Annan. No, not the same, for then she was gay and joyous, now she was bowed with grief and arrayed in the garments of mourning. With her were Madam Peyton and her daughter and old Mrs. Pleasants. Hamilton's father had gone to the front. The boy was to be taken there, and his mother had come to meet him. They, too, were in the same sombre garb, and they made a striking group, a black blot against the white walls of the old house. The women in the street were pressing hard upon the soldiers now. Cries and appeals rang along the street.

"Jack! Jack! Is it you?"

"Oh, thank God, you've come back!"

"Has anyone seen my son?"

"Oh, where is my husband?"

"Tell me, where did you leave my Will?"

And so on in a confused medley of heartbreaking appeals.

The ranks were invaded now. They were broken. The march was stopped. The regiment was home and in the arms of the women.

They carried Pleasants into the hall at Annandale. And lying there on the litter he told how Bob Darrow had led the charge. He was ill, faint, but he must tell his story. Dr. Venosste, who had come to do what he could for him, bade him speak on at last.

"I was right by his side when he fell," he said. "We led the last charge, you know, Miss Mary."

He addressed the young woman, recognizing her right above the others to hear the story.

"And the next day I sent a party to look for him, as the field was ours."

"Did they find him?" asked the girl, "or his—body?"

"No, Miss Mary. There had been a fire near where he fell that had swept away a good part of the forest on the hill. They——"

He stopped, not liking to continue the ghastly recital.

"Did they find anything?"

"There were many other bodies there. They found —evidences of those. His might have been among them."

"But his watch—that would not burn—or——"

"They found nothing, nothing that gave any clew."

"Was he dead when you left him?"

"I don't know, I think not; but hard hit, yes."

"How dared you leave him?" she cried, suddenly.

"I was driven off, Miss Mary. God knows I'd cheerfully have died for him, or with him."

"And how dare you speak so to him, Mary Annan,

you cruel, selfish woman!" cried Pink, aflame. "Hamilton, what did you go back for?"

"Pink, dear," said the young man, flushing faintly, "I seized the flag from Darrow's failing hand. He gave it to me; he said, 'Save the flag!' A little knot of our men rallied around me and stood there on that slope until they were shot down. I was alone. We were beaten back. I thought it better to save the flag, so I turned and walked down the hill. A bullet struck me——"

"What then?" cried his mother, breathlessly.

"Then I crawled with the flag until I brought it back."

"They didn't fire upon you?"

"Not when they saw me crawling away?"

"Forgive me," cried Mary Annan, kneeling down by him and pressing a kiss on his hand. "You are a hero like all the men of the South, like General Darrow was. Do you think he may have escaped?"

"It is hardly within the bounds of possibility, Miss Mary. Still, I can't say. You ought to be proud of him. He loved you so."

"Did you give him my letter?" whispered the girl, as she knelt beside him.

"Yes," whispered the young officer, softly.

Something in the situation caused the others to draw back a little as she questioned him.

"And did he—was he—what did he say—or do?"

No one heard the answer. Pleasants would have spared her if he could, but there was something in her glance that compelled the truth.

"It broke his heart," he said, feeling for her sorrow. "It struck him down as surely as the Yankee bullet on that Sunday evening."

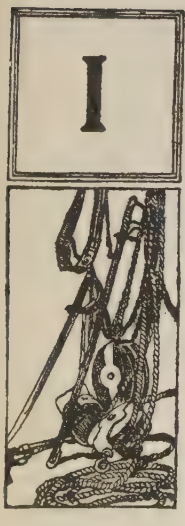
Mary Annan slipped down and fell upon her face, hearing and seeing nothing more.

BOOK IV

THE THUNDERBOLT STROKE

CHAPTER XXXII

A GREAT CAPTAIN OF THE SEA



IT was the afternoon of the 4th of August, 1864. The place was the after-cabin of the U. S. steam sloop-of-war *Hartford*, carrying the flag of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, Captain Percival Drayton commanding. An elderly officer sat, with a single companion, at a table scanning a chart spread out before him. He wore the complete uniform of his rank, a rear admiral, which was at that time the highest in the service. He was a rather small man, not stout, who still preserved his waist and figure although he had already entered upon his sixty-third year. His broad shoulders and his well-knit frame gave promise of unusual vigor for one of his advanced age. In his appearance were evidences of mental capacity and determination in accord with his physical advantages.

As he sat there he stared intently at the chart through his eye-glasses; when he removed them, a slight contraction of his brows was noticeable, which turned the upper curves of the eyelids into straight lines, giving

a singular eagle-like directness to his glance—if an eagle's eye could be kindly and filled with humor which is the completing quality of greatness. His face, which was rather long, was smooth-shaven. His forehead was broad and high. His nose was aquiline, the upper lip long; the curves of his mouth bespoke an indomitable resolution which the firm bold chin and resolute jaw confirmed. He was bald on the top of his head, but his black hair, already turning white about the temples, which was allowed to grow long on the left side, was carefully brushed over the denuded spot; in seaman's parlance, "the afterguard was made to do fok's'l duty."

His natural very dark complexion was intensified by an exposure of many years to wind and weather, largely in tropic seas. His cap lay on the table by him and a whitish line across his forehead, common to old sailors, showed where it had protected his brow from sun and storm. In spite of his dark skin his color came and went like a boy's, especially when he laughed or grew excited. His eye indeed was somewhat dim from hard usage on salt water, but his natural force otherwise was not yet visibly abated. His manners were simple, genial, and unaffected, his address easy and pleasant. When his rather plain face lighted with a smile, it became charming.

Fifty years of naval service had given the admiral the authoritative appearance of long command. There was about him that indefinable stamp of power and its habitual use, or enjoyment, which held the most presumptuous at a proper distance; at the same time he

was easily approachable, too. In his bearing there was dignity without stiffness. When he knitted his brows, as he frequently did on account of a slightly impaired vision, and his mind turned to action, his hazel eyes fairly flashed with fire and spirit. In repose there was a twinkle of humor, and good-humor, in them, which yet neither invited presumption nor allowed familiarity.

There was in his aspect some of that conceit necessary to greatness in action; a conceit which rose from careful preparation, from thorough self-knowledge, from the remembrance of past exploits and the certainty of future successes. It was a conceit obligated by achievement and, if apology be needed, condoned by it. It was an assurance that never obtruded itself jarringly, as do the vices of lesser men, but one which actually inspired everyone with whom the admiral came in contact, with confidence and courage. This serene self-confidence was the inevitable result of adequate recognition of an inherent power and ability to do things, great things, on a grand scale, based upon happy issues of the past; and it was a quality without which, no matter what other capacities and abilities may have been enjoyed and employed in individual instances, there never has existed the truly great commander.

The predominant impression that an observer accustomed to reading men would have gathered from his appearance, was one of absolute fearlessness. This native intrepidity, coupled with a habit of prompt decision, would enable him to dominate the unforeseen

emergency, whatever it might be. This cheerful courage was of the kind that decides instantly in the exigent moment; that takes the only proper course in the crisis as it presents itself. But his decision would be no more the creation of an impulse than is the speech of the lawyer or the sermon of the clergyman after a lifetime of practice or exhortation, an impromptu. It would be the wisdom of years at the touch. It would be character in action.

Wise planning and careful preparation born of long practice and experience are necessarily precedent conditions of success. But after all it is the man who employs the resultant of these things in that crucial instant when the unforeseen happening shatters all his plans and puts all his preconceived ideas to flight, who grapples victory and holds it for his own. We prepare consciously, or unconsciously, through long lifetimes for that one flood-tide moment, and greatness may be measured by the rare ability to grasp a sole opportunity. Fame touches us but for a second, and the man who is not ready on that instant to seize and hold her loses all. To be ready is half of success.

This man would never lose anything in that way. It is a habit of seamen to decide instinctively and instantly in moments of danger; they have no time to think it over; the watchword of the old sailor of the wooden sailing ship was Now! The ability to know always what to do with the helm, for instance, and the right use of the motive and directive power that lay in canvas and cordage, without a second of hesitation

—for on the sea the demands are fearfully sudden—is what distinguishes the true seaman from the theoretical sailor. His ship is a part of the tried mariner, she moves at a volition as unconsciously exercised as when he lifts his arm or turns his head. Your theoretical sailor is a different man. The Englishman always used to beat the Frenchman; that was the reason, the one was a sailor by instinct, the other by training. The Americans usually beat the English because they were sailors in both kinds! Instinct and training, that is the most powerful combination in the world!

This man had both in full.

You could see that he was a sailor beyond peradventure, a thousand things indicated it to an observing or experienced eye. He could no more disguise it than he could disguise his character. Yet there were none of the popularly accepted signs of his profession about him; nothing of the "roll-like-a-seventy-four-in-a-gale-of-wind" in his manner, nothing of the bluff, burly, bull-like, blow-hardness of the so-called "Benbow School" of sailors in his appearance. Nor was he of the red-faced, irascible type, which so many ancient seamen affect—especially in novels. He was not full of strange oaths and uncouth phrases more or less technical. There were about him none of the common affectations of the sea—indeed no affectations of any sort! Here was a cultivated gentleman of the very highest type, a most accomplished officer, a lion in bravery, almost a woman in his gentleness. His seamanly habit spoke in his method, in his cheery

ways, in his qualities, as much as it did in his sunburned cheeks.

And to the most casual observer it was evident that here was a great man, one of the few men to whom that word which is usually so carelessly employed, could be rightly applied. A leader, he; one whose actions men instinctively would be glad to emulate and upon whom they felt they could depend. Yet his greatness was rather personal than communicative, or selective, or distributive. He would do the thing himself and succeed in getting others to do it because they were inspired by his action to do as he did. He was not so much one who had devised a plan, chosen his instrument, pointed out a way, and achieved success through others. He did things himself, and the others followed him gladly. Like Grant he trusted men and was inclined to take them at their face value till failure or weakness enlightened him.

He was not of course deficient in the large ability, the foresight to see the vital point or to lay out the campaign on a large scale, far from it; he planned greatly and in his brilliant arrangements are found many reasons for his success. But in every one of his great battles he gained his greatest glory by his own personal daring, courage, and skill, in choosing the right, the noble, course in the very nick of time, when a weaker man would have faltered and faltering, failed. He was a subtle tactician, and the master always of the strategic moment.

One other phase of his character may be mentioned. He was a good man, just and upright in his dealings,

merciful in his judgments, pleasant and agreeable in his social relations, a rare husband and father. And a sincere, simple-minded Christian of high and humble type. Indeed his actions resulted from a singular mixture of confidence in his own judgment, the courage that pervaded his soul, and an absolute trust and dependence upon that Higher Power that rules the destinies of men. And seeing all these things his officers and men loved him and followed gladly where he would lead.

CHAPTER XXXIII

PEYTON POINTS OUT THE WAY

"WELL, Drayton," said the admiral, looking up from the chart at the officer sitting near him in the cabin, "I think we have done everything we can do in the way of preparation, and nothing now remains but to put the affair to the test."

"Yes, sir," answered Drayton, a tall, thin, dark, swarthy, full-bearded sailor, the able commander of the *Hartford* and Farragut's fleet-captain, as brave and capable an officer as ever sailed or fought a ship. "I can think of nothing to add to the instructions you have prepared."

"The ships are to go in in pairs, lashed together," continued the admiral, slowly, rehearsing his orders to see if anything further occurred to him, "the weaker vessels on the port hand. If one ship is disabled by the enemy's fire the other will be able to carry her past the forts, I trust. Then the tide will be at flood in the morning, and we could almost drift in were the process not a little too slow. And I count upon the tide turning the percussion caps of the torpedoes away from the ships. The four monitors will go in to starboard and ahead of the fleet and engage the forts at close

range. The two heavier single turret ones will then proceed to engage the *Tennessee*, while the double turret Mississippi River monitors will lie off the fort and cover our passage. We have had word that the *Pensacola* and the *Tecumseh* will be here this afternoon —thank God! I was mortified to death to find the army ready to begin this morning, and we not able to carry out our part of the program as agreed."

"Waiting will do the soldiers no harm, sir," said Drayton, "and I hardly think it would be prudent to venture until all the fleet be here. The odds are heavy against us as it is."

"Yes, yes, I suppose you are right. I don't fancy these iron pots myself, Drayton, but in this instance we must have them," replied Farragut, thoughtfully, with a sailor's natural reluctance to yield to monitor or iron-clad any superiority to the beautiful wooden ships on which he had served, been trained, and one of which now bore his flag.

The time was the transition period between wood and sails, steam and iron; and while sails were doomed it was not yet quite certain that the oak timber would give way to the iron beam, or the broadside frigate to the turret raft.

"Yes, Admiral," assented the captain, "you see there is the ram, you know, and the gunboats. After we get past the forts we will have to deal with those."

"Of course."

"To my mind they are the most dangerous obstacles to our attempt. They'll rake the life out of us in that narrow channel."

"Yes, they will if they are well handled, as they are sure to be. Well, we'll have to grin and bear it as best we can. Once get our broadsides to bear on the gunboats we'll make short work of them."

"And the *Tennessee*, sir?"

"We can't make any different plans as to her. Old Buck is a fighter, you know. He isn't going to wait for our passage; he's going to be in the thing from the beginning, if I know him."

"Quite so, sir! May I ask what you propose to do with him?"

"Why, fight him, of course!" exclaimed the admiral. "Mob him! Throw every ship upon him that can get a blow in."

"The wooden ships, sir?"

"Certainly; ram him with those and hammer him to pieces with the heavy guns of the monitors and our own broadsides."

"It will be wood against iron, sir," remarked the captain, thoughtfully.

"Yes, I know that, except for the monitors."

"The day of the wooden ship is about over. I suppose in the end iron will win," observed Drayton.

"Yes, I suppose so, but not in my day; not to-morrow, anyway," replied the admiral, confidently. "I feel perfectly certain we can attend to the *Tennessee* all right. We'll just work at her until we sink her by sheer weight of numbers."

"Provided she doesn't sink some of us before that."

"I've counted upon that, Drayton. I expect to lose

some of my ships, probably some under the guns of the fort and possibly some from the *Tennessee*, but we shall have enough left to complete the work, never fear. That's a risk that every flag-officer must run. And a lost ship counts for little beside a battle gained," said the admiral, philosophically. "Notwithstanding, I fervently pray all may pass safely."

"And as to the fire of Fort Gaines, Admiral?"

"Too far off for any damage to us."

"And the torpedoes?"

"We'll face them, too. If we can pass through the open channel near the fort we may escape from them."

"And if not?"

"I don't care that," snapping his fingers, "for them. By the way, I think we'd better have Peyton in here for a final look at this chart. Will you——"

"Certainly, sir," said Drayton, anticipating the request, and stepping to the door of the cabin. "Orderly," he called out, "pass the word for Lieutenant Peyton to report to the admiral in his cabin."

In a few moments a young officer descended from the deck, opened the door of the cabin, stepped within, and saluted.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Peyton," said the admiral, genially, "sit down, sir. But, first will you tell the orderly to send Freeman here?"

"Ah, Freeman," continued the old sailor, as the pilot of the fleet came into the cabin, "come around here, both of you, where you can see this chart. These are the jottings you made on the old government chart, I believe, Freeman?"

"Yes, sir," answered the pilot, respectfully.

"You think they are right, do you?"

"As near as my memory serves, sir. It has been some time since I was in Mobile Bay, admiral."

"It won't be long before you will be in once more, I fancy, Freeman," interrupted the admiral.

"Yes, sir, I hope so," answered the pilot, smiling broadly and pointing to the chart again. "There was the channel, gentlemen, but shoals change and these waters are treacherous. Still, that's the best information I can give you from memory."

"'No one can do better than his best," said the admiral. "Now, Mr. Peyton, I wish you would take a look at these shoal lines and give us your opinion on them. You were born here, I recollect, and perhaps you may be able to give us some additional information which will be helpful. I don't mind telling you, gentlemen, that, God willing, I am going in in the morning."

The young officer could not repress a sudden movement which the observant admiral instantly detected.

"My boy," he said, "I feel for you. I know something of how you must feel. When I came up the Mississippi to New Orleans my own sister and many of my relatives were in the city. I dreaded the idea that I might be obliged to fire upon them at any moment. I met your father in the Mexican War. I know he will give us a hard fight."

"Yes, sir," said the young man, proudly, "he is as brave as a lion."

"I have no doubt of it," returned the admiral,

kindly, "and it is hard to think that you must fire upon his fort, but it is a thing that a great many men have to do. I, myself, am a Southern man, born in Tennessee. I lived in Louisiana when I entered the service. My wife's people are all Virginians, too. If there had been an amicable separation between the sections I might have gone with the South, but when war came my course was clear to me. But don't you think it didn't hurt me to turn my guns against my own people, my wife's people! Eh, Captain Drayton?"

"Indeed it does, sir," feelingly answered Drayton, who was from North Carolina. "I can well remember my own sensations when I took the *Pawnee* in at Fort Royal. You know my brother commanded one of the forts there."

"And my brother is on the *Tennessee,* Admiral," said Peyton.

"Is he, indeed?" said the veteran sea-captain. "Well, Admiral Buchanan will give him plenty to do, if I know him, and us too, and we'll try to see that he has an opportunity to do all he wants. I'm just aching to meet him and have things out. Strange, Drayton, that the four men in this cabin should all be Southerners in arms against the South."

"Not against the South as a South, Admiral, if you will permit me," replied Drayton, quickly, his face flushing—his Southern ties were much more intense than the admiral's. "But against any section which seeks to disrupt the Union. Believe me, there is a difference."

"Yes," returned the admiral, thoughtfully, I see that there is. You are right."

"It's not that I have the slightest animosity toward the South, sir; on the contrary, I love her. She is in my mind like a child who tries to run away from her home and get lost, and we have to bring her back even——"

"Even if we batter her to pieces in the bringing," interrupted the old officer, smiling.

"Well, of course, these things will happen. We have to punish our own children sometimes," commented the flag-captain.

"Well, gentlemen, I think it is pretty much over now. I thought it was practically over after Vicksburg and Gettysburg, but Chickamauga gave them a lift. But now I am sure of it."

"The South has only been beaten by her own sons, sir," cried Peyton, suddenly.

"Well, not exactly," laughed the admiral. "We four happen to be Southern men, but Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan and some of the rest can't lay claim to the happy title. However," lifting his glasses, "let's to the chart. You know this harbor?"

"Yes, sir, I have sailed over every fathom of it, I believe," answered Peyton.

"What in?"

"My own sloop, sir."

"And not alone, I'll be bound," chuckled the admiral, amusedly, as he scanned the chart.

"No, sir," said Peyton, paling visibly under the brown of his cheek.

"With many a young girl for a shipmate, I'll warrant," continued the older man, not heeding the other's agitation as he scrutinized the chart.

"With one, sir. My—an old friend, sir."

Peyton bit his lip to keep from trembling at the recollection of the happy but vanished past.

"Forgive me, lad," said the old sailor, looking quickly up at him, as he remarked his changed voice, touched by the reticence with which Peyton spoke of that one, a reticence which conveyed a great deal to the quick apprehension of the admiral—"forgive me. I didn't mean to call up recollections of that kind."

"There is nothing to forgive, sir," answered the young officer, quietly. "I put all that out of my mind when I refused to resign and came North to follow the flag."

Ah, yes, Peyton had put all these things out of mind perhaps, or tried to do it, but he had never succeeded in putting them and Mary Annan out of his heart!

He spoke bravely, yet in spite of his powerful effort at constraint and restraint, it was impossible completely to disguise his emotion. The admiral looked thoughtfully at him. Drayton, divining the situation, turned away with the fine instinct of the true gentleman, and looked out of a port. The pilot stared at the chart. Each man was thinking doubtless of the one to whom his own heart was given, and the South, the beloved South, against which all of them were in arms. As the admiral gazed at Peyton the old man's ready sympathy apparent in his expressive face, almost

unmanned him. He mastered his feelings, however, and turned to the chart.

"The chart appears to be all right, sir, so far as I can make it out," he said at last, after scrutinizing it carefully. "I think there is a little more water here and not quite so much there, pilot," he added, turning to the officer and pointing at different places.

"You may be right, Mr. Peyton," answered the pilot.

"I used to notice that right there it was pretty shoal and it used to be deeper here. In its main features, however, I think your lines are very accurate."

"That's good!" exclaimed the admiral. "Now as to the obstructions. You have been up there two or three times at night. You never saw any obstructions close under Fort Morgan?"

"No, sir, never; at least, no evidence of them. The piles come down there to starboard," pointing, "but the waters are shoal there; we could not pass anyway. Of course, there is a triple line of torpedoes right across the channel except that space under the guns of the fort to the eastward of that buoy, about two hundred and fifty yards across, I take it, which seems to be a clear channel. We sunk the buoys, but I doubt if we have damaged the torpedoes any."

"They've left that space open for blockaders, of course," said Drayton.

"Well, we'll run our own blockade in the morning in spite of ships, fort, or torpedoes. You have been in Fort Morgan, Peyton, I suppose, in the old days?"

"Yes, sir. Many times."

"How is this plan of it?" thrusting another paper toward him.

"That is the way it used to be, as I recall it. Of course, they may have done a great deal to it since then."

"And the water battery you say is right there?"

"Yes, sir. It masks the curtain that looks to the northwest between these two bastions. Its guns bear square across the channel."

"And the fort has a raking fire on us until we come abreast of it."

"Yes, sir."

"Freeman," said the admiral, turning to the pilot, "you know just how to take us in to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, Admiral."

"You will be in the main-top, as usual?"

"Yes, sir. That's the best place for me. I can communicate with the deck by the speaking-tube along the mast, and I can direct our consort the *Metacomet* by hand."

"I shall be right beneath you," said the admiral, "and in touch with you. By the way, I think it would be just as well for us to take the tender and go up above Sand Island and take a final look at things this afternoon. Drayton, will you oblige me by seeing that the necessary signals are made? I shall want you and Watson to go, and you might call the commanding officers of the other ships to go with us. That will do, Freeman. No, wait a moment, Peyton; I want to speak with you," he added, as the others left the cabin.

CHAPTER XXXIV

A PROMOTION DECLINED

PEYTON," said the admiral, thoughtfully, "I have been thinking hard over your case, and if you like I will detach you from the *Hartford* and send you over to the *Pembina*, which is to remain outside. You will have plenty to do on her, as the squadron I leave behind will engage the works south of the point to make a diversion in our favor."

"What, Admiral!" cried the young man, "relieve me from my station on the day of battle! Take me out of action! Sir! Why!—I—" He sprang to his feet, his face flushed with indignation. "I don't understand you, sir!" he burst out.

The admiral leaned back in his chair and eyed him narrowly, with a glance that seemed to pierce through and through him.

"You cannot mean it, sir!" Peyton continued, hotly. "It's—it's—saving that we know you, sir, and love you, one would almost say it was an in——"

"Hold on, my lad!" said the admiral, quietly. "Your father commands that fort. Your brother is on the *Tennessee*. The place is sacred in your memory, for I

take it, from what you say and from what I have heard, that it is associated with one even dearer to you. There is no dishonor in my proposition. I am giving you a chance in one sense. In its way it is a promotion. I can give you the command of the *Pembina*. You have shown your devotion to the cause by your recent search for torpedoes and mines in the channel. I don't want to compel you to do violence to your feelings."

"Admiral Farragut," said Peyton, impetuously, forgetting in some part the distinction of age and rank which lay between them, "my feelings have nothing to do with my duty. My father did everything to keep me for the South—my mother, my sister, and —the woman I was engaged to marry, but I broke away. Your own letter to me came in the nick of time, sir, although I had already decided. Father in his excitement and anger said things that perhaps he did not mean."

"I am sure he didn't," broke in the admiral, kindly.

"But, sir, he'd rather see me dead, I am sure, a thousand times, than have me accept your offer. By heavens, sir, I'd rather be a lieutenant on the *Hartford* in this action than the captain of the *Wabash* or the *Colorado* out at sea! They, my people, haven't any love left for me, no affection, but if they had it would wither if I did this. No, sir! If you leave the choice to me—and you would not order me away, surely, under such circumstances—I stay with you."

"That's well said," cried the admiral, heartily. "I knew how it would be. It would have broken my

heart, boy, if you had gone. Besides, I want you, I need you, here."

"Thank you, sir."

"Freeman is our only pilot. Should anything happen to him your services would be invaluable. I shall want you on deck directly beneath me during the action. I will arrange with Captain Drayton that you are freed from duty with your division. You can carry my orders to the different parts of the ship, if I have any to give, and you will be on hand to take Freeman's place and pilot us in if anything happens to him."

"Thank you, sir," said Peyton, greatly relieved. "I shall be ready."

"And by the way," added the admiral, "I want you to go with us in the tender when we reconnoitre the forts this afternoon. Perhaps you can give us some more information about the situation."

"Ay, ay, sir."

There was a knock on the door of the cabin at that instant.

"Come in," called out the admiral. An ensign entered and saluted.

"Captain Drayton's compliments, sir, and he says the *Richmond* and *Tecumseh* have been signalled to seaward; they'll be here by seven bells, sir."

"Very good, Mr. Brownell," said Farragut, as the officer saluted and vanished. "That settles it! We'll go in in the morning! Now, Mr. Peyton," he continued, resuming his formal address, "direct the officer of the deck to let me know as soon as the *Cowslip* [the tender] is alongside and the captains

have assembled. Meanwhile bid him see that I am not disturbed, unless matters of great importance come up, until I return on deck."

As Peyton followed the ensign out the admiral was left alone in his cabin.

"Poor lad," he thought resting his elbow on the table and playing with his chin as was his habit, "father, brother, and sweetheart, all against him! And two of them under our guns! Yet how nobly he rose to that test! The honest indignation of a born sailor! I should have despised him if he had accepted my offer! Courage! The lad has plenty of it! And of the rare-two-o'clock-in-the-morning kind! Not many men I've met have that kind either. I'm glad he chose rightly. The place of honor's here. Now if anything happens to Freeman I can trust the ship to him.

"Ah, what a dreadful thing is war! It seems to me I can remember every soul I have ever seen killed on the decks of a ship from the day the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub* turned the *Essex* into a slaughter-house up to that last night in the Mississippi. I suppose to-morrow many a good fellow will lose the number of his mess, perhaps I may be one. Well, I have still one thing to do."

He pushed the charts aside and taking a sheet of note-paper from the drawer wrote rapidly in his bold free hand for a short time. After he had finished he sat staring down at the words he had written. Presently with a deep flush on his bronzed cheek, looking furtively around as if to make sure of the impossibility of anyone seeing him, he raised the letter to his lips.

Then he folded it, put it in an envelope, which he sealed and addressed to Mrs. D. G. Farragut, Hastings-on-the-Hudson, New York. Then he sat quietly in his cabin, his elbows on the table and his face buried in his hands. He was thinking and praying. He reminds me a little of the great Nelson on his knees in the cabin of the *Victory* before Trafalgar; but Farragut was incomparably the finer, higher type of man.

This was the letter that he had written, and no braver, tenderer words were ever penned by a great captain on the eve of his greatest battle than these that follow:

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD,
Off Mobile, August 4, 1864.

MY DEAREST WIFE: I write and leave this letter for you. I am going into Mobile Bay in the morning, if God is my leader, as I hope He is, and in Him I place my trust. If He thinks it is the proper place for me to die, I am ready to submit to His will, in that as in all other things. My great mortification is, that my vessels, the iron-clads, were not ready to have gone in yesterday. The army landed last night, and are in full view of us this morning, and the *Tecumseh* has not yet arrived from Pensacola.

God bless you and preserve you, my darling, and my dear boy, if anything should happen to me, and may His blessings also rest upon your dear mother, and all your sisters and their children.

Your devoted and affectionate husband, who never for one moment forgot his love, duty, or fidelity to you, his devoted and best of wives.

D. G. FARRAGUT.

To Mrs. D. G. Farragut,
Hastings-on-the-Hudson.

CHAPTER XXXV

IN THE WARDROOM OF THE HARTFORD

EIGHT bells had struck on the flagship, hammocks had been piped down, watches set, and other preparations made for the night. The last orders had been issued to the fleet, the final preparations made by the different ships, and everything was ready for the battle in the morning. The sea was smooth; a light shower followed by a gentle breeze tempered the summer heat. The wind poured refreshingly through the dead-eyes, opened on account of the calm weather, from one side of the ship to the other. In the wardroom of the *Hartford* the officers of the ship not on watch were congregated around a long table running the full length of the room. The insufficient light from the hanging lamp was supplemented by candles flaring and guttering on the table. And the same scene was being enacted throughout the fleet.

At the head of the table sat Kimberly, the executive officer. Near him was Watson, Farragut's gallant flag lieutenant, while Peyton sat about midway down. Pens, ink, and paper were strewn over the table, and

every man was busily writing, everyone but Peyton, that is.

The faces of all were grave and quiet. The work of the coming morning was to be no child's play. The odds were against the fleet; a powerful fort, lines of torpedoes and mines, the most formidable iron-clad afloat, the gunboats, the obstructions to the channel, the uncertain water, all constituted a series of dangers full of the most sinister menace. It was a military maxim that one gun on shore was equal to three afloat, too. A few years since only a madman would have dreamed of pitting a fleet like Farragut's against such defences. But Farragut had revolutionized naval warfare in the Mississippi and he faced the issue at Mobile with a heart confident of success although without underestimating any of the dangers, dangers of which all the officers and even the seamen in the fleet were profoundly aware. It was morally certain that not all of the ships would get through safely; it was thought if they passed the fort the torpedoes would account for some, and after all had been done there was the *Tennessee*. The *Merrimac*, a less powerful vessel, had crushed the *Congress* and the *Cumberland* like paper at Hampton Roads in '62—well, they would take care of her in some way. They would win out in the end. The admiral would do it. They had confidence in him. But he would have to pay a price for his victory. They might be the price. There was good cause for gravity therefore as they wrote to dear ones at home, some of them for the last time.

That little feeling of depression that comes over men just before action, which is to temperament what dawn or dusk is to day or night, was upon them. That solemn little moment betwixt and between the passive and the active phases of life, when lingering thoughts of quiet days mingle with the high appeals of the strenuous hour, had at last arrived.

It was remarkably still in the wardroom. Scarcely a sound was heard above the deep breathing of the men but the steady scratching of the pens, punctuated by an infrequent and suppressed sigh at intervals. They were writing to their wives, their children, their mothers, their sweethearts, their friends. Once in a while a suspicious sniff might be heard, or one of those violent blasts of the nose with which men shamefacedly seek to disguise their finer emotions. Sometimes the back of a hand or the tip of a finger went furtively to the corner of an eye. To use a handkerchief would have been a betrayal. Everybody saw or divined these motions, but nobody paid any attention.

They could enter into each other's feelings, and there was much sympathy in the silence. There would be time on the morrow to think of little but the battle. They were giving their thoughts to home now. They were writing those last precious words, which, whether they lived or died, would stand for so much to those for whom they were destined; for they would be expressions of the heart in the face of possible or impending death, when all that is true in a man speaks forth to those he loves.

They were all writing, I have said, but Peyton. To

whom should he write? he thought bitterly, as he held the pen idly in his fingers and stared at the white paper from which the noble and beautiful face of Mary Annan, embodied in the flesh almost, such was the reality of his vision, seemed to smile up at him.

They were separated as widely as the East is from the West; nay, why use the ancient simile—why not write, as far as the North was from the South? Between them yawned a great chasm of war and carnage. The blood of slain armies, the cries of women and children, the antagonism of four blasting years of terrible conflict intervened. Yes, something more. He had deceived her, had broken faith with her, gained her affection—ah, had he gained it, after all?—under false pretences.

He had been faithless to her idea of duty. But not to his own. Since the day he had left Mobile with old Dr. Bampney's hands uplifted toward him in benediction, with Dr. Venosste's white head bowed at the side of the clergyman, he had never faltered in that determination. He had never regretted it. He sorrowed bitterly on account of his separation from all he loved, the cruel judgment in which they held him, the hatred and obloquy heaped upon him—all that broke his heart. But he was satisfied with the decision he had made in that terrible crisis which had been forced upon him. His consciousness of the uprightness of his course as he saw it, was profound and absolute. Loving the South as he did, there was yet no more loyal man on earth to the Federal Union in

behalf of which he had drawn his sword. He was entirely satisfied that he had done right.

What he did regret, however, was that he had hesitated for a single moment. For that hesitation Mary Annan, the beautiful, the elusive, the fascinating Mary Annan, herself had been responsible. She was at once the cause and the victim of the situation.

It had come to him in a roundabout way, while he had been on the blockade during the past year, that she had engaged herself to his rival and former friend, Bob Darrow. He had heard nothing of the fate of the latter. He knew little of what had happened in Mobile during those four years. Not a direct word had ever come to him from anyone who had loved him. She might be dead, she might be wedded, for aught he knew. Oh, rather the former than the latter, he thought fiercely! If not in his arms, then in no other's, for he loved her still with a passion that surpassed her own. It had grown and grown. He had thought himself possessed by her before, but he knew that what he had felt was nothing, had been nothing, to what he experienced for her now.

Ever since his ship had been off Mobile he had a consciousness so elusive as to be indescribable, so unreal as to mock him with its vague indefiniteness, yet so powerful after all that he was forced to recognize it, a consciousness of her nearness—of her love even! It had sustained him, uplifted him, given a little hope.

He did not believe that she was dead. Some word, some warning of it, would have been dragged from the unknown by the compelling character of his feel-

ings. He could not believe that she was married, either. She was so much his own in his mind that the thought of marriage to another was almost like profanation. She must love him! The war must end some time; if he survived it and she still lived he might find her again, persuade her to love him; they might be together once more and for life!

She had rejected him, of course. She had heaped scorn and contempt upon him. Well, from her point of view he had deserved it. She had looked at him on the porch as if she could have killed him. Had her eyes been arrows he might have been slain, so hate-envenomed had been their glance. Yet he remembered that when Darrow, inspired by her mordant words, had moved forward to strike him unresisting she had blindly interfered. Why that?

He sat there still with his pen idle in his hand while his shipmates wrote. Should he write to her? Would she care? Would she read what he had written? If he were alive, no; if he were dead, yes, perhaps. Well, if he survived the action matters would be as they had been before, and if he fell she might some day care for a letter from his hand. He would write to her, after all.

He drew a sheet of paper before him, lifted the pen again, and found himself facing another question. What should he say to her? Should he explain, should he appeal, should he justify himself? Nay, to attempt these things would be useless. Thinking deeply, he resolved what he would do.

He told her how he loved her in a few words that

almost seemed to burn the page. He told her that while his duty and his honor had constrained him to take the course he had, yet with every fibre of his being, with every throb of his heart, with every emotion of his soul, he loved her! He always would love her! When she would be reading this that he was writing he would be beyond her censure or approval, but he could not rest in his grave, he could not be happy even in a heaven, unless she knew and believed that he was absolutely hers, saving his honor and duty, unless she realized that he loved her absolutely and entirely and forever!

"Take," he wrote, "whatever may be your future, dear, the memory of an affection such as comes to few women. It can neither hurt nor harm you now. And remember"—he could not avoid this one sentence of exculpation—"that if I had not been true to my duty, if I had not followed the path where honor led, the affection which I ask you not to forget would have been an insult, not an honor, to any honest woman. And I beg you again to forgive that one kiss on the porch. I have not forgotten it. It seemed to me at that moment that you almost loved me. The touch of your lips has abided with me. I shall take it out into eternity. The mocking-bird has never sung in my ear without bringing your picture, your cheek, with the color coming, the rise and fall of your bosom, your eyes ashine in the darkness and looking love into mine. The song reminds me of you, Mary Annan. Ah, well is it named the mocking-bird! This is all. I would not tire you. This is only to ask you to re-

member; but whether you do or not it is nevertheless true that on the eve of a great battle, with death looking me in the face, I have told you the truth only. But not all of it. No words can frame, no paper hold, that which is in my heart. Good-night, good-by, and God bless you."

It was a brief letter, but the most indifferent woman could not have read it unmoved. It breathed a passion that would live, and the most heedless memory could not forget it.

There was something else to be done. There were others to whom his mind turned. His mother, his sweet-faced, soft-voiced, young mother—his heart had many a time quivered at the recollection that she had pleaded for him on the porch. In imagination he put his head down at her knee as he had done as a little boy learning to say, "Now I lay me." And so he wrote to her too. There were words for Pink and Willis—appeals that they would think of him kindly and try to understand his position. Indeed, he had never forgotten Willis for the impulsive yet generous action which had prevented him from leaving home without a single friendly word. He loved the boy, a man now, and supporting his flag on the mighty *Tennessee*. There was his father, too. What did the stern, implacable old man think of him now?

War is a great dispeller of animosities of one kind. Or it may have been peculiar to this particular war that it beat down hatreds and men saw things more clearly in the mist and smoke of battle than in the sunlight of peace. He wondered if, from

the ramparts of Fort Morgan, his father had watched the ships with a thought of him, as often as he had, looking at the fort from the deck of the *Hartford*. When he had rowed cautiously up the channel to reconnoitre the torpedo line a few nights since he had almost felt impelled to turn his boat into the wharf back of the fort in the bay and run to the old man and beg, if not for forgiveness, for a kindly word of greeting.

And now he was about to fire upon him. He was to turn the great guns of his division on the *Hartford* full upon the fort where his father commanded. Perhaps he might be called upon to lead the ships up the channel. And if that were not enough he, with the rest of the ships in company, was to engage in mortal combat with the *Tennessee* and his brother; a missile hurled from a gun, the lock-string of which quivered in his own hand, might carry death or destruction to one or the other of the men he loved.

There was agony in the thought, torture, but no hesitation in his mind. He could not have given up his position on the *Hartford* for any consideration. This was a fratricidal war at best, such possibilities as he imagined had to be faced. It was a part of duty. Ah, the grinding compulsion of that iron word! Peyton's sailorly honor and his devotion to duty had become so intensified that he was almost quixotic upon them. Indeed honor and duty were all that were left him to cling to, except the affection of his new friends.

He finished the letters, inclosing Mary Annan's in the one addressed to his mother, begging her to read

and deliver it, and then he abandoned himself to his thoughts. Most of the other men in the wardroom had finished their letters by this time as well. Those who had completed the task sat silent for a while, staring at the table, loath to speak. Finally Kimberly broke the silence.

"Here, fellows," he said, "this will never do! We'll go into action in a blue funk if we don't brace up. Somebody start up a song. Now, dash it all, Whiting," he continued, as a young ensign started to sing 'Home, Sweet Home,' not that, not to-night, anyway. Let us have 'The Bay of Biscay, O!' Give us a regular old-timer. That's right!" he cried, as the ensign's clear voice rose in the room. "Now men, all of you, come in in the chorus," beating time. "Heave away! That's it!"

They were glad of the relief afforded by the song, which seemed to shatter the quiet and gloom which hung over them. One song started another, presently someone told a story, and a second capped it with another; the room was filled with laughter and merriment for an hour. Presently the black steward of the wardroom came in with a pitcher of water and a rare piece of ice.

"No whiskey or liquor to-night, lads," said Kimberly, gayly. "We'll drink the sweetest toast in the purest liquid. It is getting late. We have had our hour of sadness and our hour of fun. I'll give you a toast—the Saturday night toast. Come, everybody, take a glass. What, Peyton, are you going?"

"Yes, Kim," answered Peyton, "I—I think I'll go

up on deck and relieve Yates. He has a wife, you know, and he can drink the toast. I don't need to."

"We'll drink it for you, old man," cried Heywood, the marine officer, clapping him affectionately on the shoulder.

"And my lad," said Kimberly, grasping his hand, "we know the circumstances, of course. We feel for you. We wish somebody else was in command of that fort."

"I don't," said Peyton, sternly. "My father will put up a fight that will make your hair turn gray, and that's what you want. And I reckon my brother will keep up his end on the *Tennessee*, too."

"Before we drink the toast, fellows," said Watson, "let's give three cheers for the Peytons—the old man on the fort, the boy on the *Tennessee*, and our own shipmate on the *Hartford*. Thank God, there is good fighting blood in all of them."

The little room rang with cheers as Peyton sprang up the companion-ladder with a heart so full that he could scarcely contain himself. As Yates, happy to be relieved, came tumbling down below Peyton leaning over the hatchway heard Kimberly give the immortal toast of the navy:

"Sweethearts and wives—may the former soon be the latter, and the latter always be the former."

They drank it in silence and separated for the night, Some for a quiet smoke, forward, others for deep, heavy sleep; some for night-watches, others to turn in anxiety in their berths until the breaking of the portentous day.

Peyton leaned over the railing and looked toward the lights of Fort Morgan, with a longing and heartache that cannot be described. He had been nerving himself for this situation for four years, and now that it had come upon him he found himself still unprepared. His father on the fort was at that moment gazing at the fleet below him and wondering when they would attack. And Willis, keeping watch on the superstructure of the *Tennessee*, thought with a strange pang, a foreboding, that night, of the soon-to-be-expected meeting of the ships. The fighting blood of the Peytons was up though. There would be no shrinking in any one of the three. Morning might find any of them struck down, but in the line of duty, at the post of honor.

Boyd Peyton could see in imagination—stop! He could not continue in this strain, he would need all his powers in the morning. He must be cool and self-possessed then. Yet he could not get those he cared for out of his thoughts. If anyone died he prayed it should be he. He stood on the poop-deck leaning against the Parrott rifle, still staring at the fort. A step sounded on the deck beside him, breaking his reverie. He turned to meet the admiral. The old man walked with as jaunty a step as if he had been a boy.

"Asleep or dreaming, Mr. Peyton," he asked, smiling.

"Neither, sir, just watching Fort Morgan."

"How peaceful it looks! And you were thinking of——"

"Of my father and brother, sir, of home and mother and Mary Annan up the bay."

The night, the silence, the loneliness made the young man more communicative; the admiral inspired confidence and welcomed it. He had known Peyton ever since the latter graduated from the Academy, and the younger man loved him with unusual affection, which the admiral reciprocated in full.

"Ah, that's her name, is it?" said the old sailor, gently and kindly. "Well, pray God that we may come through safely, and that there will be no more heartaches in homes than is absolutely necessary." He laid his firm, well-shaped hand upon the young officer's shoulder in a kindly, sympathetic touch. "Keep a bright lookout, Peyton," he said at last, "and don't hesitate to call me if anything suspicious occurs. It would not surprise me if Buchanan came out with the ram to attack us at any moment. It would disappoint me dreadfully if he did, though. I want to catch him inside, now that we are ready, and finish up the whole job at one blow. Where's the ensign of the watch?"

"Forward, sir."

"When I was on the *Essex*, I remember, as a midshipman, just turned eleven years of age, I went to sleep lying on a gun-carriage in a mid-watch one night. The watch-officer saw me, and instead of waking me up he actually covered me over with his jacket and let me sleep on!" said the admiral, reminiscently. "I ought to have been court-martialed for it, but I've always been grateful to him, and I've never forgotten his reprimand, either."

"No one on watch will sleep to-night, Admiral."

"No, I suppose not. There are thoughts grim enough to keep them awake, now. How's the wind?"

"Little enough, sir, but what there is is from the southwest."

"That is where we want it. Looks black off there, too."

"Yes, sir, I think we shall get another squall of rain."

"Well, rain or shine, we go in with the flood in the morning. I think I shall turn in now, and as soon as your watch is over do you try to get a little sleep. Remember that I, that we, that the country needs the best there is in you to-morrow."

The admiral wrung the hand of the young officer, turned on his heel and walked quietly to his cabin. But Peyton could not follow the kindly advice. When he went off watch at eight bells, midnight, he could not sleep for the trouble in his mind. And how much greater would have been his anguish if he had realized that Mary Annan sat that night in one of the casemates at Fort Morgan!

CHAPTER XXXVI

BETTER IN THE MORNING

A FEW days before the battle the *Ivanhoe*, a blockade runner, had been chased ashore under the guns of Fort Morgan, where she had been destroyed by some of the light-draught gunboats of the fleet. While with a party of men from the fort, endeavoring to save some of her cargo, Beverly Annan had been struck in the abdomen by a piece of a shell. The wound was necessarily fatal. Mary Annan had been at once summoned from Mobile by telegraph and had come down to the fort on a tugboat with Dr. Bampney and Hamilton Pleasants, now a colonel on General Maury's staff, Tempe was not allowed to come, but had remained at Annandale under the care of Mrs. Peyton and Pink.

There had been no attempt to disguise the seriousness of her brother's wound, and it was with forebodings of the worst that she sat in the bow of the tugboat watching the water rush away on either side as they raced down the bay toward the fort. Having

heard of the accident at the last moment old Dr. Bampney had insisted upon coming with her and she had a wretched feeling that his services might be more needed than those of a physician. Hamilton Pleasants had also gone with Mary Annan. The two men, the young man and the old one, tried to cheer her up as they sped along, but with so indifferent success that they finally withdrew and left her, which was in accordance with her own preference. The trip had been made rapidly enough, but all too slowly for the woman's anguished heart.

Oh, the cruel, cruel war! It had robbed her of father and of the man who loved her; it had parted her from the man she loved, and now its ensanguined hands were reached out to take from her the last who could transmit her honored name. And he was only a boy, a child. She might have been spared this, surely. Her eyes blurred so with tears that she could not see, yet there was a thought in all her anguish—she hated herself for its lodgement in her mind—that with every passing hour she was drawing nearer to Peyton!

As they swept past the three Confederate gunboats they saw beyond them, between them and the channel, the great iron-clad *Tennessee* rising above the gently tossing water like some black volcanic rock, stern, sinister, menacing, impregnable. The light smoke that curled around the top of the tall stack indicated that she had steam up, and the absence of the usual deck gear would have told a practiced eye that she was stripped for action. They passed close to her, so

close that Willis Peyton on the superstructure recognized Mary Annan and her escorts and lifted and waved his cap, wondering the while what had brought them down there.

Far to the southward beyond Fort Morgan, she could see the ships of Farragut's fleet moving to and fro. On one of them was her lover. The Confederates were not ignorant of Farragut's purpose to pass the forts, force the harbor and engage the *Tennessee*. Indeed had he not done so, daring old Admiral Buchanan, who commanded this mighty war monster and the Confederate naval forces, had decided to go outside and engage him. At any day therefore the fort, the gun-boats, the ram, and the fleet, now looking so peaceful, bathed in the warm sunlight of the late afternoon, might be engaged in hurling shot and shell upon each other with deadly purpose she realized, and he might be among those who suffered. Was he to be taken from her, too?

They were very near the fort now. Presently they drew up at the landing, and a few minutes' toilsome walking over the shifting sandy shore brought them to the cavernous mouth of the sally-port. Challenged there, they waited until the officer of the guard appeared and, recognizing them, conducted them into the fort and thence into the brick citadel proper. There General Peyton himself met them. He looked much as he had before the war. A little older, a little whiter, a little grimmer, that was all.

There was nothing but kindness in his face now, however. He had always loved Mary Annan. She

had been almost like a daughter to him. Now that her own father had gone he felt like a father to her. Indeed, he had hoped that he might be in that relation to her some day, before his boy turned his back upon the South and broke his father's heart. Ah, many a day had the old man mounted the rampart and stared at the ships, thinking of that lad who had gone away. General Peyton had loved Beverly Annan too, for his father's and sister's sake as well as for his own, and it grieved him sorely that the bright-faced, proud-hearted young lad should be stricken down.

"How is he?" cried the girl, as soon as she saw the general.

The old man shook his head mournfully.

"Is there no chance, no hope?"

"My dear," he said, taking her hand in both his hands, "you are a soldier's sweetheart"—she winced at that—"and you are a soldier's sister. You must bear it! The poor boy, he is giving his all for the South and that flag," he added, lifting his hat as he looked up at the tall staff with the white-starred blue St. Andrew cross stretched over its red rippling folds.

"Yes, yes," said the girl, "the war is taking everything from me, everything! But where is he?"

"In the casemate out yonder," answered the general, "we have fitted it up as a hospital. Colonel Pleasants and Dr. Bampney, after you have seen him I wish you would come over to my quarters. I want you to stay with me until——"

He stopped suddenly with a significant pause which cut the girl to the heart.

"We have no spare room in the fort to speak of," continued the old man, quickly, smiling a little, "but we can fix up a shakedown for you."

"Thank you, General, anything will do for me," said Pleasants; "I am an old campaigner, you know."

"Although I am not a campaigner," said Dr. Bampney, "I am old enough for anything to do for me too. We'll be with you presently."

The casemate was not an unpleasant place. The low arches that sprang almost from the floor had been freshly whitewashed. It was all neat and clean, and the sunlight poured in through the open door. There were half a dozen cots in it. Over in one corner lay a sick soldier. The others were untenanted save for the one occupied by Beverly Annan. The surgeon, just then coming on his rounds, stood by the foot of the bed. A tall, gaunt artilleryman sat at the head fanning the patient. The boy lay with his eyes closed, his head thrown back, motionless; a low moan broke from his lips from time to time. He was as white as death and broken with suffering. His face had that thin drawn agonized look that bespoke anguish past and present, and that drives loving hearts mad, save that it promises rest soon in the future.

Mary Annan and the two men walked softly over to the bed. Something rose in her throat and seemed to choke her as she looked at her little brother. He had been so bright, so handsome, so full of spirits, and now it was all come to this. Of all the men in that garrison her boy, her boy alone, had been stricken down—the lad who should have been at play at school.

Now he would never play again. The impartial touch of war and death had been laid upon him.

The girl herself was almost broken. She had passed through such a year, nay, such a four years, as no one had ever dreamed could come upon the land. There were hollows in her cheek too, and sadness in her eye. Her heart was bowed down by its weight of grief and anxiety, but her spirit was still undaunted. Again she typified her land. Everything had gone against her, and the South, but with grim, terrible, unshakable resolution the South fought on. It was in the last ditch now. The most heedless saw the end. Yet not one thought of giving up. Amid all the other cries there was none heard for quarter.

As she leaned over the cot, in spite of herself a sob broke from her lips. The sufferer heard it and opened his eyes.

"Sister Mary," he whispered, stifling a low moan like the brave little soldier he was, "don't cry. It doesn't hurt so very much—does it, Doctor? And he says—he says—I will—be better"—the boy bit his lip, as a paroxysm of pain shook his body, to keep from crying out—"better in the morning. Won't—I, Doctor?"

"Yes, my boy," said the physician, biting his own lip in turn, "I hope so. I think so. I am sure of it."

"Who is that with you? I can't see very——well, Sister Mary."

"It's Colonel Pleasants and Dr. Bampney."

"Gentlemen," said the lad—and what a gentleman

he was himself, the two men thought—"I'm glad to see you. You will—excuse me for—not—getting up? It—was good—of you—to come down here—to see me. Where—is father, Mary?" he said suddenly, with a little bewildered stare. "I—I—want him. Why doesn't he—come too?"

The girl looked at the two men in hopeless agony. The old clergyman knelt down by the boy's bedside and took his hand in both his own.

"You will have your father in the morning, my son," he said, softly, understanding, as they all did, the doctor's meaning.

"Is that you, Dr. Bampney? Father—I will see him—in the morning. 'Our Father'—that is what you taught me—when I was a boy—in your Sunday-school."

"Yes, my lad," said the old man, " 'Our Father:' "

"Say it, Doctor."

The two voices, the old one leading, the other feebly following, softly uttered the eternal prayer. Pleasants covered his face with his hands. The sick soldier in the corner lifted himself upon his elbow and listened; the artilleryman rose and gave place to the woman, and considerately left the casemate, and poor Mary Annan knelt, too, and buried her head in the bed-clothes by her brother's side.

"That's a—good prayer, Doctor," said the boy, after a long silence. "Oh, how—this—hurts me! But—I—will—be better—soon. Won't—I?"

"Yes, my boy, better soon."

"I must bear it—too—mustn't I—because I—am

—a soldier—a—man—an—Annan?—bear it—for the honor—of the South—for—the cause—I love? Don't cry, Sister Mary. It will—be all—right in the—morning."

He lifted his hand weakly and dropped it on her bowed head.

"Annan," said the doctor, coming into the room, "here is the general coming to see you."

"Beverly, my boy," said General Peyton, looking down at him gravely and tenderly—it might have been his own son he looked upon—"how do you feel now?"

"Much the same, sir," said the boy, making a pitiful effort to salute, "it's a great—honor for—the—general to come—visit a private, sir."

There was that in that casemate that levelled all distinctions of rank.

"We are not general and private now, lad. You are just the son of my dear old friend. I have come to say good—" the general hesitated a moment, "good-night to you."

"I am glad—it isn't good—by, sir. I—I don't want—to die now. I want to—live and do more for the South. If I'd only—got my wound—in battle when I—was doing something."

"Never mind, my boy," said the old man, "you are wounded under your flag, in the service of your country. Nothing could be more honorable."

"Thank you, sir. Oh, Doctor—can't you give—me something so—that I can get a—little sleep? It—hurts so! And—it hurts Sister Mary—to see me suffer."

"I will give you something," said the doctor, turning away, "and perhaps you can sleep."

"Good-night, General."

The old general went to the head of the bed, hesitated a moment, stooped down and pressed his lips upon the boy's brow.

"Good-night, my boy, and God bless you."

Followed by Pleasants, he walked slowly and sadly through the door and stood outside the casemate listening.

"Now, Annan," said the doctor, coming back, "drink this, and then perhaps you can get a little sleep."

"You will—stay with—me, Sister Mary? And you, too, Dr. Bampney?" said the boy, as he quaffed the draught.

"We will not leave you," said the clergyman, quietly.

"Never again," added Mary, brokenly.

"You can't say that—Sister Mary. Because—when I—am well—I must go on duty—once more."

"Yes, when you are well."

"Sister Mary," said the boy, after a pause, "won't you sing me something?"

With her breaking heart, she did not think she could frame a note, yet what could she do but try?

"What do you wish me to sing, Beverly, dear?"

"Sing me—some of the songs—you used—to sing."

"Which one?"

"The 'Mocking-Bird.'"

God, who had given her the voice, gave her the

power to use it. How she did it she could not tell. Kneeling there by the bed, she sang the old song, the song that brought up the days of the past; the song of the man who had loved her and was gone—who had died on the hills of Chickamauga—and the other man she loved on the ship beneath the alien flag. It brought back days of happiness and hours of joy, sweet dreams of the past. Low and clear and sweet as the notes of the bird itself the song rose in the air. Outside the casemate the two officers listened. The sentry on the ramparts stopped entranced. The men of the garrison, led by the artilleryman, crowded nearer, listening with beating hearts. Hats were removed from heads, and heads were bowed as the music rose and fell. As the last note died away the trumpet from the ramparts sounded retreat call and the colors came drooping gently down the staff.

Within the casemate all was silent.

"That's a good song," said Beverly, faintly, at last. "It almost makes—me forget—the pain. Sing more."

"A hymn this time, Beverly?"

"Yes, this time—a hymn."

"What shall it be?"

"'My faith looks up to Thee.' That's a good—hymn—Doctor—for a soldier."

"Yes, it's a good one for anybody, Beverly."

There are harder things than fighting battles, things that women have to do. To sing that hymn, to keep the throat clear, and the heart down, to sing in the face of death itself, with anguish gnawing at the soul—to lead a charge, to die on a field, were child's play

by it. The boy listened with closed eyes and compressed lips. The woman sang with every fibre in her being vibrating with pain and grief, with despair accompanying the notes, yet she never stopped nor faltered, her voice never broke. Honor and duty bade her sing, and she inflexibly followed their behests.

Rich and full rose the rare contralto voice with its deep note of passion. Mary Annan had never sung so well before, and she would never sing so well again, perhaps. The words and music of the mighty hymn rolled through the casemate and out through the citadel of the fort, where the officers and men, wet-eyed, listened in the twilight:

> " When ends life's transient dream,
> When death's cold, sullen stream
> Shall o'er me roll;
> Blest Saviour, then, in love,
> Fear and distrust remove;
> O, bear me safe above,—
> A ransomed soul."

How still he lay, she thought, as she looked down upon him—how very still! Was it over? Had so ended life's transient dream for him? Not yet, O pitiful God, please not yet! She lifted her hand to her throat. No, he was speaking!

"Thank you," he murmured, rousing himself a little, "I won't ask—you to—sing any more—Sister Mary. You must be—tired."

"I will sing more if you want me to, brother."

"No, I'm—going—to sleep now," he gasped out. "Do you remember how mother—used to have us—

kneel—at her—knee every night? I haven't—forgotten—that prayer. I always say it. We'll all—say it. And—then—I'll go—to—sleep and be—better—in the morning."

"Now I—lay—me—down to—sleep. I pray—the—Lord—"

The old doctor finished the prayer alone in the silence. The opiate the surgeon had given the boy had at last taken effect, and the sufferer drifted out to sleep. He would be better in the morning.

Ah, how many sufferers have been cheered through long nights of pain by that sad, elusive hope—better in the morning!

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE FLEET GETS UNDER WAY

SIX bells in the mid-watch, sir," said the marine orderly, tapping deferentially at the door of the admiral's sleeping-room, while to the accompaniment of their shrill whistles the boatswain and his mates were piping, "Up all hammocks!"

"I am awake, Orderly. What sort of a morning is it?"

"It's been cloudy and squally, but it bids fair to break clear now, sir."

"How's the wind?"

"Light from the sou'-west, sir."

"Good! Send Mr. Watson and Mr. Peyton to me; I would like to see them in my cabin as soon as I am dressed. Is Captain Drayton up?"

"Yes, sir."

"Give him my compliments and ask him to come here too; say in about three quarters of an hour, all."

The admiral, who had risen as the orderly departed, dressed himself with deliberate care. Like most of the old-fashioned fighting captains whom he resembled in many respects, he prided himself on wearing full uni-

form when going into action and consequently he attired himself in his best. He buckled on his sword, which had been given him by an old friend, and which was his almost constant companion. He invariably wore it when on duty. Just as he completed his careful preparations, which included a long and fervent petition to Almighty God for the success of the dangerous undertaking he was about to commence, Drayton, followed by the two lieutenants, and Dr. Palmer, the fleet-surgeon, came down into the dimly lighted cabin.

"Good-morning, Admiral."

"Good-morning, Captain Drayton. Good-morning, gentlemen. The tide will be at full flood in a few hours and we'll carry out the program. You may call all hands and get the ships lashed together, sir."

"Very good, sir."

"And, Watson, you will signal the fleet to couple up and prepare for action."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"The wind is sou'westerly, so the orderly reports, Drayton?"

"Yes, sir, rather light now, but gives promise of growing heavier."

"It's lucky for us that the wind blows that way, for it will carry the smoke over Morgan and make it difficult for them to see us."

"And not obscure our view of them either, sir?"

"Certainly not. The gunner who couldn't hit a mark that bulks up like Fort Morgan had better go and be a haymaker!"

"Admiral, you won't fail to call upon me for any service in case the enemy don't give the medical corps work to do?" asked Dr. Palmer.

"My dear Palmer, I expect to call upon you and every man for the best that is in him this day. But don't fear that you won't have plenty to do in your own line. We'll not get through scathless, by any means, more's the pity."

"But in case we don't get through at all, sir?" asked the surgeon.

"I do not contemplate such a possibility, sir. We shall get through; we must, we will! Come in," called the admiral, in answer to another knock. "Ah, Mr. Heginbotham, what is it?" he asked a young officer who presented himself.

"Mr. Kimberly bade me report that the *Metacomet* is coming alongside, sir."

"Quick work. What time is it?"

"About eight bells, sir," answered the youngster, and at the instant the mellow couplets rang out forward.

"So it is. How's the weather now?"

"Fine, sir, and the wind is freshening," continued the young man, eagerly.

"Very good, indeed, and are the other ships at work?"

"All that we can see, sir."

"Very well, Mr. Heginbotham, you can go on deck, sir."

"Admiral," said Drayton, as the ensign saluted and ran up through the hatchway, "I shall go on deck and

oversee the lashing if you have nothing further for me to do."

"Do so, Drayton; I'll see you presently."

"And I'll go below to the sick bay," said Palmer.

"Very well, you'll both join me in a cup of coffee, and my steward will knock up a bit of breakfast for us, before we get under way. Now, Mr. Peyton, I want to speak to you a few moments about the harbor. I wish to get a clearer idea of the situation myself, sir. In case anything happens to the pilot or you—which God forbid—I might have to carry the *Hartford* in myself, you know."

For some time the two officers pored over the chart in the dim light, and after the admiral had thoroughly mastered all its details—indeed, much previous study had made him thoroughly familiar with it—Peyton returned to his duties on deck, whither the admiral presently followed him.

Apparently the ship was the scene of busy confusion in the darkness preceding the dawn, out of which order was being rapidly evoked by the systematic efforts of the officers and the zealous work of the seamen. The *Metacomet* was close alongside and the lashings to secure her to the *Hartford* were being rapidly and carefully passed. Below in the engine and fire rooms things were being steadily put in an equal state of preparation. The admiral's sailing orders indicated a slow passage, but the moment when all steam and full speed would be sorely needed might occur at any time, and the men of the engineer division were determined to be in readiness for any demand or any emergency.

In some respects theirs were the most dangerous stations in the ship. They would feel the first and most deadly effect from a torpedo, a shell in a boiler meant death to them, and the horrible death of Marsyas, at that. It was desperately hot below that August morning in the far South, and it would be hotter as the day drew on and they got into action. What of that? They went about their duties as cheerfully as the gayest light-yard men.

Everything that skill and experience could dictate had already been done to protect the more vulnerable and vital parts of the *Hartford* and the other vessels of the fleet. The boilers and engines were sheltered by chains stoppered along the sides of the ships, in some cases by barricades of sand in bags. The light spars and top-gallant masts had been sent down. Some of the ships had even struck their top-masts and went in with only the lower masts standing, although the *Hartford* and the *Brooklyn* both carried their top-masts through the action. The starboard boats had been left behind or were towed on the port side, and everything that ingenuity or experience suggested had been done by the different captains to render their ships immune to the tremendous fire to be expected from formidable Fort Morgan and the Confederate squadron.

The morale of the flag-ship and of the fleet in general was simply superb. The men laughed and joked with each other as they went about their appointed duties. They were completely oblivious to any danger to themselves or their ships in the approaching battle. And a

doubt of their success never entered their minds. The admiral had carried them through many a scrape, and he would get them through this one somehow. The old *Hartford* and her men had been in too many battles to fail now. They would get battered up a bit, doubtless, but they would win out in the end, never fear. The gun was not mounted, the ship did not float, that could sink that *Hartford* with Farragut aboard.

Shortly before three bells in the morning watch, or half after five, the admiral, accompanied by Drayton and Palmer, went below to his cabin for a light breakfast. As the three men stood in the dark cabin, lighted by a few candles—for although the sun had just risen it was not yet light enough below decks to see by—the admiral, sipping a cup of tea, a favorite beverage of his, remarked, abruptly:

"Drayton, I am sure that I have made a serious mistake in giving way to the representations of you fellows and allowing the *Brooklyn* to go in first. It's not right. That's the place of the commander-in-chief—in the lead."

"Now, Admiral," said Drayton, remonstrating affectionately, "you know we settled all that last night, and you gave way to our unanimous judgment. The *Brooklyn* has four chase-guns and an apparatus for picking up torpedoes. I feel sure we are right, and I beg of you not to think of changing the order now."

"Oh, very well," said the admiral, unconvinced. "I don't doubt that I will get to the front somehow. Meanwhile, have it your own way."

"We have no fear of your not getting to the front, Admiral," said Drayton, smiling. "It isn't that. You know the fort and the gun-boats and the ram will all concentrate upon the *Hartford*, thinking to crush or sink you and then have the rest of us at their mercy."

"And they'll make a mistake there. They may sink me, but they will find a dozen captains left, each one good enough to lead a fleet. Wasn't it Nelson who said at Aboukir that he had the good fortune to command a band of brothers? Well, if he hadn't said that before I would say it now. I tell you what it is, Drayton, I have been an officer of the navy for fifty years. I have seen and known all the great captains of 1812, and have met most of the great officers of the Old World navies, and I never came in contact with a better set of fellows than these of mine are. They are the peers of any men who ever faced a gale or fought a ship. You know I get melancholy when I think of them sometimes. The age of sails is going; it is almost gone. The ships of the future will be like that black monster Old Buck has under him, and over him. Your naval officer after a while will be an engineer, a mechanic, anything but a sailor. I am old-fashioned, I suppose, but I cling to mast and yard, to rope and canvas. Give me the wooden deck, the wooden keel, beneath my feet! I feel lonesome and uneasy with nothing but iron between me and Davy Jones. This is the last effort of the wooden fleet, I think. Well, we'll make it a good one."

"Signals from all the ships indicate that everything is ready, sir," said Watson, coming in and saluting.

"Ah, very good. I knew, of course, that they would be, but it is a relief to find things are all right. There is nothing I so much dread as a signal at the last moment that some ship of my fleet, upon which I depended, has gone wrong. Are the monitors ready, Watson?"

"Yes, sir, all ready."

"Well, that relieves me more. I haven't a bit of faith in those iron pots. They are always breaking down or doing the unexpected."

"They are good hammers, though, Admiral," said Palmer.

"Yes, that they are, and I expect them to do a great deal of it this morning. Well, Drayton, I suppose we may as well get under way," said the admiral, quietly, going on deck, whither the others followed him at once.

As the shrill whistles and calls of the boatswains rang through the fleet the cables were slipped to the buoys, the engines started, the screws began to revolve, and the ships gathered way in the water.

And this was the quiet manner in which one of the greatest naval battles of modern times was begun.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

"AFTER YOU, PILOT!"

THE day broke brilliantly clear and fair as the *Brooklyn* and *Octorora* got under way at 5.35, followed five minutes later by the *Hartford* and the *Metacomet* and in succession by all the ships which were to attempt the passage. The couples of ships were about a cable's length apart at the start. The fleet moved slowly—for the admiral's orders had been for low steam and slow speed—and started for the bar off the main ship channel. At the same time the smaller gunboats headed up to the northeast with the intention of engaging the fort from its south side, so that if possible they could keep down its fire upon the main fleet.

The national colors, the largest-sized fighting ensigns, flew from every masthead, except where from the mizzen of the *Hartford* the blue flag of the admiral, with its two white stars, fluttered in the breeze. The black ships came on in grim, threatening silence, the only spots of color about them being the red and blue of the flags, already lighting and gleaming in the rising sunlight.

A few minutes after six o'clock the *Brooklyn* and the

Hartford crossed the bar and were fairly in the channel. Volumes of black smoke pouring from the smoke-stacks of the squat, ugly monitors lumbering from the cove behind Sand Island, far ahead of them, indicated that these formidable fighting machines were ready for action. At half after six the monitors were well in the channel, heading up to the fort, distant from them about two miles. At 6.43 the head of the fleet came abreast Sand Island Light, three miles from the fort. There was a delay here of some ten minutes, to enable the fleet to close up within short supporting distance, and at 6.55 the order to advance once more was given.

The vessels were ranging well up by this time in a bow and quarter-line, that is, with the van ship, the *Brooklyn*, a little off the port bow of the next in line, the *Hartford*, with the *Richmond* a little on the starboard quarter of the flag-ship and so on, in order that the chase-guns of all the ships might bear on the fort and there would be no danger of one ship firing into another.

Meanwhile, at 6.47, the actual battle had begun. Two long lines of light bursting into balloons of flame-shot smoke leaped from the huge muzzles of the fifteen-inch guns of the *Tecumseh* in the lead, and the shells were seen to burst over Fort Morgan. The roar of the discharge, startling the stillness of the summer morn, carried far down the slowly advancing line, and was heard even in the holds of the ships, by the surgeons in the cockpits, the gunners' mates of the powder divisions, the engineers at the engines, and the men in

the hot depths of the fire-rooms. Instantly through the fleet, as if in answer to a signal, might be heard the rattle of the drums calling the men to quarters, the last final preparation for action.

As the welcome notes rolled about the decks the eager, ready men leaped to their stations. As the orders "Cast loose and provide!" "Man the starboard battery!" "Run in!" "Load!" rang out, the sea lashings of the massive guns were cast off by the willing hands, they were run in, loaded with charges which the efficient powder division had broken out from the magazines, and then run out and a turn taken with the training tackles to secure them. The confusion, or apparent confusion, attendant upon the ultimate preparations of the ship for the deadly occasion, subsided and in silence broken by a subdued word here and there by the officers, by the musical calls of the leadsmen in the chains calmly indicating the depth of the shoaling water, and by the throbbing beat of the engines as with screw or paddle wheel they were being urged gently forward, the ships swept steadily in. The men, like the ships, were cleared for action. Many of them chose to fight stripped to the waist, naked, except for a pair of trousers.

The monitors, which had been rolling ahead, were almost abreast the fort now. The ships, which had moved faster, were close at hand. At six minutes after seven o'clock the watchers on the *Hartford* saw a puff of smoke rise from the parapet of the fort, followed a few minutes after by the roar of a heavy gun. In another moment the fort was covered with smoke,

out of which jets of flame darted, and shell began to scream down toward the ships. At the same time from the lee of the fort the black *Tennessee* came shoving her nose athwart the channel just where the opening had been left for the passage of the blockade runners. Following her were three saucy gun-boats, the *Morgan,* the *Gaines,* and the *Selma.* They took position in line across the channel in excellent position for raking the ships coming up the channel toward the fort.

Craven, in the *Tecumseh,* caught sight of the *Tennessee.* Disdaining the heavy fire of the fort of which he was now abreast, which was concentrated upon him for the time being, he loaded his fifteen-inch guns with steel shot and the heaviest charge of powder then permitted, and made up his mind to grapple with the ironclad. Meanwhile the other three monitors, as close to it as they could get, were firing furiously upon the fort. At seven minutes after seven the *Brooklyn* opened fire with her chase-guns. Four minutes later the *Hartford* joined in the battle with hers, none of the broadside guns as yet bearing.

The ships were well up now and coming along grandly in spite of the fire from the fort, which was growing sharper and more severe as the gunners got the range. At twenty minutes after seven the Brook rifles on the *Tennessee* and the rifled thirty-twos on the gun-boats added their voices to the hellish clamor. The line had become lengthened out a little by this time, and the leading ships slowed down once more to let the rear vessels close up again.

At 7.35 the *Brooklyn* was fairly abreast of the fort. Her heavy broadsides now bore square upon it, and the guns loaded with grape, shrapnel, and shell, the fuses cut short, the range not more than three hundred yards, poured in broadside after broadside in rapid succession, which was returned with splendid spirit by the garrison, especially by the water battery, masking the northwest curtain between the channel bastions. A few moments after the *Hartford*, now close aboard the *Brooklyn*, also got the fort abeam under her guns, and by mighty broadsides almost cleared the batteries.

The Confederates could not maintain their stations at the barbette guns in such a rain of shot as that; they were forced to seek shelter between the broadsides, and their own fire abated perceptibly. But now the leading ships were within easy range of the guns of the *Tennessee* and the gun-boats dead ahead. The Union fleet made a splendid target, and the fire of Buchanan's gun-boats, for the most part effectively handled and well delivered, was fearfully effective. Except for a few light chase-guns the ships could make no reply. The fire of the gun-boats was much more destructive than that of the fort at this juncture.

Meanwhile at the head of the line the *Tecumseh* was making for the *Tennessee*. Craven's orders, as were the orders of all the other captains, had been to pass to the eastward of the easternmost buoy through the clear channel right under the guns of the fort. But with a fine tactical apprehension of the situation on the part of Admiral Buchanan, the *Tennessee* had moved over now so that she was stationed just be-

hind the line of torpedoes. To get at her the *Tecumseh* would have to cross the line, or by going to the east of the buoy find herself in a very dangerous as well as disadvantageous position. By Craven's initiative, therefore, the orders were disregarded and the *Tecumseh* dashed straight for the *Tennessee*. The heart of Craven was bent upon grappling with the iron monster toward which he was now heading. He believed that he was more than a match for her, and he determined to try it. Buchanan was not less willing and anxious for the test. There would be no indecisive *Monitor* and *Merrimac* fight about this action.

The leading ships were now fully engaged, and the roar of the battle was tremendous. The water between the ships and the fort was whipped into foam by the shot. Clouds of smoke and flame hung over the scene, and the fort itself looked like a volcano in eruption.

Aft on the poop-deck of the *Hartford* stood Drayton, magnificent officer that he was, cool, calm, and collected, watching the ship. By him was Watson, the flag lieutenant, and Ensign Brownell, calmly taking notes of the action. The admiral had gone forward and climbed up on the sheer poles of the port main-rigging in order better to see the movements of his ships. As the smoke of the battle settled over the bay he unconsciously ascended ratline by ratline, in order to rise above it and still be able to see his fleet. Presently he found himself just below the futtock shrouds beneath the top. There he stopped. He could communicate with Freeman, the pilot, in the

top above him, who was conning the ship through a speaking-tube to the deck, and directing the movements of the *Metacomet* by motioning to Lieutenant-Commander Jouett, her captain, who stood on the starboard paddle-box not far away. Immediately beneath the admiral Peyton was stationed ready to take his orders, or to take Freeman's place and lead the ships in in case the pilot became disabled.

Watson, following the admiral with attentive eyes, noticed his extraordinary position, and, realizing that even a slight wound might cause him to lose his balance and fall to the deck, sent a quarter-master, Knowles, up the rigging with a line, directing him to pass it around the admiral and secure it to the shrouds, so that if he were wounded he would have some support which would prevent him from receiving a fall to the deck, a dangerous distance below him, or maybe going overboard. When the man explained his errand the admiral permitted him to take a couple of turns with the bight of the rope around his body and make the ends fast to the rigging.

The action had now become general. The garrison of the fort, driven to shelter by each broadside, again and again gallantly returned to their batteries and reopened fire. Everything seemed to be going nicely for the fleet when an event occurred which completely upset the admiral's plans and daunted some of the stoutest hearts in his command, for the monitor *Tecumseh* struck the line of torpedoes; one of them exploded beneath her forefoot, the bow of the iron-clad lifted, plunged forward, and she went down with her stern in

the air in a few seconds. A few men escaped from the turret, and were seen struggling wildly in the water.

Craven and the pilot met at the foot of the ladder leading to the top of the turret, the only means of escape for either of them. There was room for one and but one, on that ladder. The ship was fairly dropping into the depths under their feet. What happened? Without a moment of hesitation Craven drew back, motioning the other forward. "After you, Pilot," he said grandly and with exquisite politeness. As the pilot sprang forward the ship sank beneath them, and Craven went down with his ship.

To be a gentleman all the time and to go down with his ship—these are characteristics of the American sailor.

CHAPTER XXXIX

"DAMN THE TORPEDOES! GO AHEAD!"

WHEN she sank the *Tecumseh* was close aboard the *Tennessee*. Willis Peyton, who commanded the forward gun division on the ram was grimly waiting by Admiral Buchanan's specific order until the two vessels were in actual contact before cutting loose with his rifles. He was appalled, just before the monitor reached him, to see her reel, plunge, and vanish beneath the sea.

In the confusion the men of the *Hartford* got the idea that the *Tecumseh* had sunk the *Tennessee*. They leaped on the rail and cheered madly in their exultation, and the crews of the other ships, deceived also, joined in the acclaim. But the admiral was not deceived. He had noted the whole disaster. He saw the men in the water, too. Instantly he called to Peyton:

"Take one of the boats of the *Metacomet*, Peyton, and try to save those men. Give him a boat, Jouett!"

"Ay, ay, sir," replied that cool young officer, as Peyton clambered over to the *Metacomet's* deck, gathered a boat's crew as he ran, dropped into one of

the cutters dragging along to port, pulled out around the stern of the *Hartford*, right into the hell of battle to starboard.

The loss of the *Tecumseh* was not the only disaster of the morning, however, for the *Brooklyn*, which was in the lead, suddenly stopped.

"What's the matter with the *Brooklyn*, Freeman?" cried Farragut, hailing the pilot. "She must have plenty of water there?"

"Plenty and to spare, Admiral."

"Why does she stop, then?"

But she did more than stop. Though that was disastrous enough, she began to back down upon the *Hartford* and the rest of the fleet. Indeed, this action of the *Brooklyn* was the only cloud on the glory of that day.

The leading ships were right under the guns of the fort now, a few hundred yards away. The fire from Mobile Point was terrific. As the *Brooklyn* backed her helm was shifted and she turned her bows straight to the fort. Her broadside no longer bore, and her position in a measure blanketed the other ships. The men in the fort and in the water-battery, quick to see the disadvantage of the fleet, sprang to their guns again and, taking deliberate aim at point-blank range, began to rake the hapless *Brooklyn* from stem to stern. The splinters literally flew from her in sheets. Shot after shot beat into her, shell after shell ripped through her, and she could make no reply to this fearful fire. If the gunners in the fort had only depressed their guns she must have sunk then and there. Her decks

began to look like a slaughter-pen. The *Hartford* and the *Richmond* also came under a fearful fire. The ships were almost silent, no guns bearing, while Fort Morgan roared and seethed with hell and destruction.

"What's the matter?" cried the admiral, his face clouded with anxiety. "Send me an army signal officer," he shouted, in a shrill voice that was heard even above the commotion.

In a moment this man reported that the *Brooklyn* was signalling by flags in the army code "Torpedoes ahead." She had seen a line of empty shell boxes thrown out by the *Tennessee* and her consorts, and had mistaken them for torpedoes. This in conjunction with the loss of the *Tecumseh* and the narrowness of the channel through which he was expected to pass, and its nearness to the fort, had caused the captain first to stop and then to attempt to back his ship. He was beaten.

The six leading ships were now huddled together in serious danger of collision under the guns of the fort, which were deliberately ripping them to pieces with heavy shot. The high masts of the *Hartford* and the *Brooklyn* clearly indicated their position and enabled the gunners in the fort and on the Confederate squadron to find them easily in spite of the smoke. To hesitate was to lose everything. It was that crucial moment of the battle upon the instant decision of which depended success or failure.

Admiral Farragut used to tell how at that moment he breathed a brief prayer to the God in whom he trusted, saying, "Shall I go on?" and the answer came

in a voice which seemed to him audible in that storm of battle, "Go on." That was what he did. What he said was vastly different.

When he learned that it was fear of torpedoes that had backed the *Brooklyn* and swung her athwart the channel he shouted out in those sharp tones that could be heard everywhere on the ship:

"Damn the torpedoes! Four bells, Drayton! Full speed, Jouett! Back the engines of the *Metacomet* hard and then go ahead."

The one backing, the other going ahead, Farragut swung his flag-ship across the *Brooklyn's* stern—it was impossible to cross her bows in the position she then was or he would have done so—and dashed at full speed up the channel. He was forced to skirt the shoal closely as he did so, and there were but a few feet of water beneath his keel as he rushed on.

"We cannot pass to the eastward of the buoy, now, sir," called out the pilot, as they cleared the *Brooklyn*. "The monitors are right in the way in the channel."

"Straight ahead!" roared the admiral. "Right at the line!"

At full speed now the *Hartford*, enveloped in flame and smoke from her own guns, rushed for the deadly torpedo line. Broadside after broadside went smashing into the fort as she swept magnificently on. Would she too meet the fate of the *Tecumseh?* What would happen? A few moments would determine, but moments are hours in such scenes as these.

The men below on the *Hartford* and the *Metacomet* heard a series of detonations as if musketry were being

exploded beneath the keel. The primers of the torpedoes as the mighty ship struck them snapped one after another, but the salt water had rendered the deadly infernal machines innocuous. That and the admiral's forethought in going in with the flood-tide, which turned most of the percussion caps away from the onrushing ships, saved him.

In a moment he was safe over the line. It was a few minutes after eight o'clock. Grim and black before him loomed the *Tennessee* and the gun-boats ahead of her—their position giving them immunity—raking the *Hartford* again and again. The *Tennessee* made for the flag-ship as if to ram, but by clever manœuvering and her faster speed the *Hartford* prevented this. The two vessels exchanged broadsides, however, and shells from the *Tennessee* passed through the wooden ship, while the solid shot from the *Hartford* rebounded harmlessly from the iron sides of the *Tennessee*.

Shot and shell were coming in from all sides on the *Hartford*, still within range of the fort, and so rapidly were her own guns served that she looked like a ship on fire. A ghastly procession of wounded men were being sent to the cockpit, and the decks were covered with dead men weltering in their blood. The carnage was fearful.

Meanwhile, inspired by the example of the admiral, the *Brooklyn* got her head around at last and, followed by the *Richmond* and the *Lackawanna* and the others, rushed desperately for the torpedo line, the captains thinking to go to a noble death with their admiral. Owing to their anxiety and hurry the regular order

was abandoned, and the ships passed up as they could, sheets of flame and smoke pouring from their broadsides upon the fort. Some of the ships passed perilously near the shoals in the confusion; at one time the *Richmond* had less than a foot of water under her keel.

As Farragut passed out of range of the fort and the *Hartford* got out into open water he cast loose the *Metacomet* and turned his broadsides upon the gun-boats, which, being utterly unable to cope with such a heavy ship, fled incontinently, pursued by Jouett at full speed. As the other ships came up they followed the example of the first pair, and the Confederate flotilla was hotly chased by the Union gun-boats.

Meanwhile Buchanan on the *Tennessee* ran down the fleet. He tried to ram one ship after another, but without success, while he himself was lightly rammed by the *Monongahela.* Into each one, however, as he passed her, he poured his terrible broadsides, indifferent to the return fire from the heaviest guns they carried.

The tremendous broadsides of the great ships in the lead had kept down the fire of the fort, but when the vessels of less gun-power came swinging by the Confederates returned to their positions, punishing them severely; the last one in the procession, the rear ship of the fleet, was the *Oneida.* Except the *Brooklyn* and the *Hartford* she suffered more than any other, beset both by the *Tennessee* and the fort. A shell from the fort exploded her boiler, killing or wounding every man in the fire-room, leaving her helpless, while an-

other from the *Tennessee* took off the arm of her commanding officer. Her consort, however, and the drifting tide, finally carried her past the fort and up to the rest of the fleet. The *Selma* was captured by the *Metacomet.* The *Gaines* was wrecked by shells, beached and burned. The *Morgan* succeeded in gaining the protection of the fort, where the *Tennessee* presently joined her.

At half after eight o'clock the *Hartford* anchored above the middle ground, followed in succession as they arrived by the other ships of the fleet. The passage had been made, but at a heavy cost in shattered ships, a lost monitor, and dead and dying men. The three remaining monitors which had done noble service remaining close to the fort and heavily engaged until the last ship passed, brought up the rear. During the battle the admiral had marked Stevens commanding the *Winnebago,* walking calmly back and forth between the iron turrets of his monitor, quietly directing their fire; and the whole fleet had joyed in the sight of Perkins dancing excitedly up and down on the top of the turret of the *Chickasaw;* both the vessels and the officers being in easy rifle range of the enemy.

"What we have done, Admiral," said Drayton, "has been well done, but it counts nothing so long as the *Tennessee* rides yonder beneath the fort."

"I know it," returned the admiral, "and as soon as the men have had their breakfast I am going for her."

CHAPTER XL

IN THE CASEMATE OF FORT MORGAN

MARY ANNAN had refused to leave her brother's side to take any rest, and old Dr. Bampney had faithfully kept her company. Together the two watched through the long night. Many a vigil the old clergyman had kept by the bedside of the dying, not often one so sad as this. The boy slept heavily at first, but as the effects of the opiate wore away the persistent pain made him restless. Toward morning he drifted into consciousness again, as he had drifted into sleep the night before.

It is a hard thing to look at one we love suffer and be able to do nothing; to give no answer to the mute appeal which fills the eye even though the lips do not frame it. Nowhere else is the utter impotency of humanity so apparent. There was nothing more to be done for Beverly Annan, absolutely nothing. Medical science of that day did not possess the anodynes of the present, and if it had, the limited resources of the hard-pushed, straitened Confederacy would have been unable to supply them. The boy had to shut his teeth and

suffer as men have suffered since time and the world began; and she had to shut her teeth and bend over him and suffer even as if she had been wounded herself. There was no other way.

Well, it would soon be over. Death is an appalling thing to most people. Usually it is more horrible to those who stand by and see another die than it is to the dying. Generally there is little room for philosophy, for apprehension, for curiosity, in the articles of death. The dying, almost invariably, suffer so that all their conscious desires are merged in one overwhelming wish for a respite, for a cessation of pain, a surcease of suffering, and when the respite does come they are too weak to care; but there comes a time when the horror of death vanishes even for the watchers, and those who love most, pray most fervently that the end may come quickly and the terrible struggle give place to peace.

It was morning and Beverly was no better, only he was nearing the end. There was something in that. The surgeon had come and gone with a despairing shake of his head, the general had stooped over him once more and had left him with tears in his eyes. He was an old soldier, he had seen many people die; few had affected him as did this lad. Little groups of his comrades had come in, tip-toed over to the bed, gazed silently and sympathetically on him, and had gone out again without a word. Sometimes he recognized them, sometimes he did not.

His suffering was so keen that all his physical faculties were drawn up into it, and it was only in brief inter-

mittent periods of comparative respite that he took cognizance of things about him. Sometimes he muttered incoherently, but generally what he said was sufficiently intelligible. By and by the pale grayness of the dawn rose-colored the East. The light of the rising sun presently leaped through the open door, flooding the casemate. Dr. Bampney rose and put out the lamp. After a while a beam fell across the bed whereon the boy lay. It was broad daylight now, and there came to him one of those rare moments of comparative ease. He opened his eyes and saw the light on the wall.

"Morning," he murmured; "no better."

There was a sudden fierce rattle of drums outside, the shrilling of a trumpet. The peaceful silence of that summer morning was broken by hurried commands, the rush of many feet, shouts and cries; the creak of tackles as the huge guns were loaded and prepared for action, which filled the room with a dreadful note of preparation.

"What's that call?" he whispered, hoarsely. "It's the assembly!" he cried, his voice growing stronger. "They must be coming up at last. They are casting loose the guns! I must go to the ramparts. Duty!"

He actually lifted himself on his hands and rose in his bed. For a second they stared at him, horrified at his appearance. Then he fell slowly back on the bed, a helpless look on his face, whiter than the linen of the pillows.

"I cannot!" he gasped. "Useless, O God——"

Something had happened. He was dying. The

end was at hand. The woman seized his hand, looking at him. He did not speak.

Two sudden flashes as of vivid lightning out of the clear sky of that morning dazzled the vision. They seemed to come from directly overhead. They were followed instantly by a detonating crash appalling in its terrific volume. The two shells fired by the *Tecumseh* had burst above the citadel. The air was filled with smoke and flying iron.

"It's war," the boy cried, suddenly, his voice as full and strong as if he were in health. "I must go—the flag——"

But it was of no use; the last flicker of his vitality had gone into his will. He was going on a longer journey than to the rampart now. He was past all speech as he lay on his pillow. The girl dropped his hand, rose and stood over him, her hands stretched out to him. Only the arm of the old clergyman kept her from falling across the bed. It seemed to her afterward that she heard his voice coming from far away, murmuring broken words of consolation and prayer. Over her head and about her the guns were roaring now. The rattle of the grape-shot, the screaming of the shell, the crashing detonations of the cannonade, filled the morning with hideous sound. But above all the noise in some strange way her faculties were so attuned that she caught and heard that faint, desperate struggle for breath on the narrow bed before her. For five minutes, perhaps, it continued, growing fainter and fainter, and then it just stopped. Thank God!

In spite of the clamor outside—the room seemed strangely silent. She could hear her heart beat, or was it about to stop too?

"War, war!" she gasped out brokenly, at last, "and I wished it! I welcomed it. With other women I cheered them on. Now we are paid. Oh, my boy, my boy! My little brother, the last one! War, war! And he is out there!"

Oh, Peyton, Peyton, what power had you over this woman's heart that even at this moment she could think of you! She dropped upon her knees by the bed and seized the lifeless hand of her brother and laid her forehead upon it, murmuring again and again, as if she could not get away from the idea, "War, war!"

"Ah, my dear, war is terrible," said the old doctor, tenderly smoothing her hair as it swept the cover, and then drawing her gently away; "but there on the bed is peace at last. Thank God for it!"

They were not allowed to cherish their grief alone, or for long, however, for as Dr. Bampney spoke a body of men crowded through the casemate door. The casemate was in the curtain which was protected by the water battery, and was probably the safest place in the fort. For that reason they had turned it into a hospital. The men who entered it bore on a rude stretcher a frightfully injured soldier, who had been terribly torn by an exploding shell. And there were other wounded and dying also that followed hard upon the first in that hour of battle. As she thought of that afterward, they proved the salvation of the woman. They gave her something to do. Her mind was reel-

ing under the shock, but she gave herself to the wounded, and that distracted her from her grief. She did not forget, no, never that; but in serving others she found strength to bear her own burden. There were so few who could be spared to look after the wounded, and she and Dr. Bampney rendered good service to the surgeon and his assistants. Under other circumstances she would have shrunk appalled from the horrors of the wounded there in that bloody casemate of death, but she had gone through everything already; her sensibilities had been quite deadened by the strain upon them. She was past shock and suffering, she thought. At any rate she found strength to do what few women trained as she had been, could have done, and to the demands of the situation she was enabled to make adequate reply.

But when the battle was over and the strain relaxed she had to take cognizance again of that small boyish figure under the white sheet covering it from head to foot, while she wondered dimly if Boyd Peyton, too, had been sacrificed to the insatiable war-god that ruled the land.

CHAPTER XLI

ON THE END OF THE WIRE

AT half after six in the morning the operator at head-quarters in Mobile was called up to receive information that the Federal fleet was at last about to attempt to force an entrance into the bay. The news was taken instantly to the commanding general, who, knowing her intense personal interest in the battle in which her husband and two sons were engaged, immediately dispatched an orderly to Mrs. Peyton with the news. In a few moments Mrs. Peyton with Pink, and Tempe, who had insisted upon accompanying them, came into the telegraph office.

The little room was filled with men. General Maury and his staff were crowded around the operator's desk listening, with their intense emotions reflected in their faces, to the messages clicked off the wire.

"What is it, General Maury? Is there news?" asked Mrs. Peyton, as she came into the room.

"Make way here, gentlemen," said the general, forcing his way through the crowd and coming toward the

woman. "My dear Madam Peyton," he continued, "the enemy are about to engage the forts and our naval force in the bay."

"Has the battle begun?"

"Not yet, madam. The fleet is just coming within range. The monitors are leading, and they seem to be in three columns. We will get news as fast as it comes in. There is a direct wire between the fort and head-quarters here. Go within the railing, Mrs. Peyton, and you, Miss Pink. There are chairs there, and you will have a little more room. We are so interested that I am afraid that we might crowd you out here," said the general, courteously.

Within the railing and next to the operator the two women and the little girl sat down. There was a window looking to the south near them, which was open. As they settled themselves to listen, Tempe, whose ear was of the keenest, suddenly called out in her shrill little voice:

"Don't you hear the guns? There!"

She pointed toward the open window as she spoke. The room had been filled with noise, which immediately gave place to silence as everybody stopped talking or moving to listen. Mrs. Peyton's heart beat so that she could hear nothing. One or two officers thought they could distinguish the sound, but most declared themselves unable to hear anything. As the child had spoken, however, the general looked up at the clock on the wall. The hands marked 6.47.

Click-click, click-click-click, click-click, click-click, rattled the sounder on the table. The operator trans-

lated the message verbally as the words were spelled out by the key:

"Leading — monitor — opens — fire. Shells — explode — harmlessly — over — fort. Garrison — at — quarters — ready. Pleasants — acts — as — aid — to — General — Peyton."

A deep sigh broke from the lips of Madam Peyton at this confirmation of the news. Tempe was right, then. She had heard the two fifteen-inch guns of the *Tecumseh.* A murmur of conversation broke out in the room again, to be instantly hushed at the calling of the sounder:

"Beverly—Annan—just—died."

"My brother," wailed little Tempe, bitterly, bursting into the noisy tears of childhood.

Pink Peyton, herself almost heartbroken, for her lover as well as her father and brothers was there, gathered the little waif to her breast and strove to soothe her agitation. She would have given worlds to weep herself.

"Poor boy!" said the general, taking off his hat, "poor lad! Well, he died like——"

"Click-click!" rang again from the table.

"Fort — has — opened — fire — with — every — gun — that — bears. General — Peyton — freely — exposes — himself — on — ramparts. Monitors — close — to — fort. Leading — monitor — heading — toward — *Tennessee* — which — with — gun-boats — standing — across — channel — heavily — engaged. Two — of — our — men — killed. Names — later. Leading — ships — firing — shell

— and — shrapnel — point — blank — range. Monitor — approaching — *Tennessee*. Firing — heavy — and — continuous."

The room was filled with such excitement as has rarely been contained within four walls. Distinctions of rank were forgotten. Men crowded around the operator seated before the trembling key, their breath coming quickly, their faces red or pale according to their temperament, as the story of the tremendous action thirty miles away was clicked off in broken sentences from the tenuous wire. It was like holding a battle by a thread. That long strip of copper put them in touch with it. It was alive. In their imagination they could hear and see as they waited and listened eagerly for more tidings from the front. Murmurs, mutterings, ejaculations, broke from the deep-breathing men.

Tempe sobbed softly in Pink Peyton's arms. Mrs. Peyton sat with her two hands clasping the arms of the chair, her head bent forward, her face lifted as if she were waiting, and in vain, for some assurance of the fate of those she loved, from the slender wire.

In the intervals between the messages the room quivered and vibrated with outward manifestations of the fierce pent-up emotions possessing the listening people, which seemed as if they must break the walls, as they burst from the hearts of the men and women hanging upon the clicking key. And how they listened all, but none as Mrs. Peyton.

Outside a great crowd speedily gathered, as the news flew from house to house in the city that morn-

rampart. Channel — covered — with — smoke. *Hartford* — appears — to — be — on — fire. Fleet — in — hopeless — confusion. Our — gunners — make — fine — practice — on — them. Rest — of — fleet — close — up."

The woman was almost distracted. There was no excitement, nothing thrilling in the scene for her. First her husband, then her boy on the *Tennessee*, then her boy on the *Hartford*, in that hideous net-work of death and destruction, in that awful hell of war. Wherever she turned she was struck to the heart; no matter who won or what happened, she lost. It seemed as if her whole being was there in the very centre of it all, as if every shot that was fired passed through her heart. She had gone through some terrible experiences, this was the worst of all. She could bear it no longer. Stop! That awful wire was clicking again.

"A — ship — disengages — itself — from — fight. Swings — around — *Brooklyn* — heads — up — channel. Fire — of — gun-boats — and — *Tennessee* — concentrated — on — it — alone. Bears — admiral's — blue — flag. Impossible — to — pass — except — over — torpedo — line. *Hartford* — approaching — the — line."

Another of those soul-racking breaks; was the *Hartford* to meet the fate of the monitor?

"Small — boat — flying — Union — flag — observed — pulling — between — ships — and — fort. Purpose — to — rescue — few — monitor's — men — surviving. General — Peyton — orders — gunners

— not — to — fire — on — brave — fellows — saving — life."

What did she care for small boats or anything but for that ship on which her oldest son fought, now perhaps right over those deadly torpedoes! Oh, why was that key silent? Didn't they know it was playing with a mother's heart? The strain was killing her. Unless it began again she should go mad. She was trembling and shaking like an aspen leaf in spite of her effort at self-control. No one paid attention to her, so eagerly were they listening.

"*Hartford* — nearing — torpedo — line. Boyd — Peyton — recognized — as — officer — on — small — boat. Can — scarcely — escape — between — fort — and — ships."

"Boyd! Boyd! It can't be!" whispered the woman.

"By God!" cried one of the men, "he may be a traitor to the South, but he's a brave man—a hero!"

"Boat — picks — up — few — men. Turns — back — to — ship. Right — in — centre — line — of — firing. Not — possible — to — escape. *Tennessee* — running — for — *Hartford.* *Hartford* — right — over — the — tor——"

The sounder stopped calling.

Mrs. Peyton, exhausted human nature at last giving way, sank gently to the floor in her daughter's arms.

No more messages came over that wire. They waited in great anxiety for a minute or two, and then the operator strove to call up Fort Morgan. In vain —the connection was broken. A shot from the *Rich-*

mond had demolished the telegraph office, wounding the brave operator, who had watched the fighting from a vacant embrasure whence he telegraphed the news.

There was nothing to do in Mobile but wait. Whether the *Hartford* was blown up, whether the ships succeeded in passing, whether the *Tennessee* fulfilled the expectations of her builders, they could not tell. The people lingered in the streets, straining to catch the sound of the cannon, and General Maury sent couriers down both sides of the bay to re-establish communication with the forts, and, if possible, learn what had happened.

CHAPTER XLII

IN THE METACOMET'S CUTTER

WE left Peyton in the cutter of the *Metacomet*. The men who had been detailed to man the boat had tumbled over the side in such eagerness that they almost fell to their places on the thwarts. Oars were broken out at once, Peyton grasped the yoke-lines in his hand, the boat swept around under the vigorous impetus of the stout arms, passed the stern of the *Metacomet*, darted between the stern of the *Hartford* and the bow of the *Richmond*, her next astern, ranged along the starboard side of the *Brooklyn*, and entered the zone of fire.

The roar of the discharge was absolutely continuous. The air was filled with shot and shell. The screaming was like the sound of a thousand tempests. The water all about them was lashed to froth, beaten into foam, by grape-shot, canister, shrapnel, and bits of iron from exploding shell. Close as they necessarily were to the ships, the tremendous broad-sides from the decks passed only a few feet above their head. It was a situation to appall the stoutest heart. They

seemed to be floating on a sea of boiling water canopied by a heaven of fire. Their position was one of horrible peril. One shot striking the little boat and they would be lost. Between the triple cross-fire from their own ships, the fort, and the Confederate squadron, it did not seem humanly possible that they could escape. Peyton had pulled about half the length of the *Hartford* before he discovered that no flag was flying.

"Oars!" he called, instantly, and as the men stopped rowing, he dropped the yoke-lines, stepped forward, and picked up the boat flag from where it lay in its case along the bottom of the boat, came back to the stern-sheets, uncased it deliberately, shook out its folds coolly, and then stepped it aft in the socket provided. He did not do this a moment too soon. The forward pivot-gun on the *Hartford*, of which he was right abreast, had been turned on him. Seeing only a boatful of men in the smoke, ignorant that it was one of their own, supposing, perhaps, that it might have been a torpedo-boat, the lock-string quivered in the hand of the officer to speed the bolt which would have blown the cutter out of the water.

"'For God's sake, sir!" cried one of the men of the gun crew, recognizing the young officer as he peered over the rail, "don't fire! It's Leftenant Peyton!"

At that opportune instant the flag rippled out. How the men on the *Hartford* cheered as they saw it and noticed the sturdy oarsmen pick up the stroke and shoot the boat ahead toward the place where the *Tecumseh* had gone down.

An officer and a few men ready to give up were

swimming exhaustedly in that vortex of fire, when the boat swept alongside them. The cutter had gone ahead of the main battle to reach the place where the *Tecumseh* had been sunk, and as she came bursting out of the heavier pall of smoke she was in full view of both the fort and the ram. General Peyton caught sight of the boat first.

"Look yonder!" he cried to the men of the next barbette gun to his position, pointing, "fire on that boat! Sink her!"

Colonel Pleasants, however, standing by his side, had fortunately caught the boat at the same moment in the field of his glass.

"By heaven, sir!" he cried, "there's your son!"

"Should I spare my own son," cried the general, sternly, "more than any other man who is an enemy? Fire upon him!" he cried to the hesitant gunners.

"No!" said Pleasants springing toward the gun.

Was he too late? The piece had been trained on the boat and the gun-captain's arm had already tautened upon the lock-string. In another moment the hammer would fall and the shot be sped. The distance was too short to miss, the aim perfect.

The old general covered his eyes with his hand. His duty bade him fire, his heart would not let him look. But Pleasants intervened. He threw his hand over the vent of the piece, and the hammer struck the back of his hand a sharp blow, numbing it with the force with which it fell, but the gun was not discharged.

"General Peyton," cried the young man, still clutching at the vent, "they are on an errand of mercy! They

have no arms! They are picking up men from the *Tecumseh!* For God's sake, don't fire on them!"

"Thank God!" cried the general, greatly relieved. "Pass the word not to fire on that boat," he added, turning to a staff-officer near, "if it can be helped! Hurry, sir! It is saving drowning men!"

Now it was the ram's turn. Willis Peyton had charge of the forward division of guns on the *Tennessee.* As the little boat came shoving through the smoke he turned one of the Brook rifles on it. She was too far away for him to recognize his brother, but presently he divined the errand of the boat was one of mercy, and with chivalric gallantry—for which, when he learned the truth, he thanked God thereafter —he depressed the breech of the gun, and the bolt, which would have sunk the cutter to a certainty, went screaming down the line into the bunched-up fleet. Meanwhile Boyd Peyton, unconscious of all this, went coolly, if rapidly, about his work. He had no time to linger, and he could not afford to think of the horrible peril menacing him and his men. His mental salvation consisted in thinking of nothing but his duty then.

Just as he fired Willis Peyton saw the *Hartford* break from the mass and head toward him. Admiral Buchanan, in the humped pilot-house forward, saw her at the same time. The helm of the *Tennessee* was shifted and the ram was headed straight for the flagship. Expecting every moment to see the latter blown up by the torpedoes, the iron-clad slowly moved forward just above them, waiting for her. When the

Hartford passed the line of torpedoes unharmed the iron-clad made for her, but the attempt of the *Tennessee* to ram was frustrated by the quicker movement of the *Hartford*. With a quick prayer that it might not find his brother, whom he still believed to be on the ship, Willis Peyton poured the shot from his division at short range into the flagship, and then attacked in succession the other ships as they came swarming up the channel in the wake of the admiral.

Boyd Peyton succeeded in saving an officer, eight men, and the pilot from the *Tecumseh*, and a few others gained the beach under the fort by swimming, all that were left of the one hundred and sixteen on board. Carefully and deliberately scanning the water to see if any others were struggling there, he finally turned the prow of his boat toward the ship, and rowed over toward the fleet. If that boat crew never pulled hard before they did it then! The *Hartford* had passed up long since. The *Brooklyn* was just heading up the channel. The *Richmond* and the *Lackawanna* were going ahead. But the rearmost ships were almost stationary. His only chance would be to get aboard one of these. Sweeping around to port, he rowed down the line through the fire-swept sea, with his flag flying in a magnificently gallant passage of the channel. He might have darted through an interval between one of the pairs and rowed in comparative safety down the port-side of the fleet. To do that would have been to lose time, however, and might have prevented him getting aboard of the ships. At any rate, with cool and thrilling courage he chose deliberately to

pass between the ships and the forts still heavily engaging.

It was one of the most heroic acts ever performed by a naval officer, a deed of cool daring, requiring a courage that may be fairly called superhuman. Peyton had not gone into the battle with equanimity; very few men can do so. He had been nervous, agitated, excited, but the first few shots had restored his calmness, and he made that fearful passage under fire as coolly as if nothing had been happening. By hard rowing he succeeded in gaining the deck of the *Oneida*, the last ship of the line, a slight sloop-of-war.

Farragut's second mistake in this otherwise perfectly planned and brilliantly fought battle—the first being in not taking the lead himself in the beginning—was in not putting one of the heaviest of his ships to cover the rear of his line. The *Oneida* being without support received the concentrated fire of the fort and the *Tennessee*, which had passed completely through the fleet, dealing death and destruction to it on every hand. As Peyton clambered on deck Captain Mullany, glad indeed for such reinforcement—for his ship was suffering severely in officers and men—gave him command of one of the forward divisions, and distributed his men among the depleted gun-crews.

As the *Oneida* drew up opposite the fort she was forced to pass through a terrific besom of fire. A heavy shell from the fort exploded one of her boilers, killing all the men in the fire-room in the most dreadful manner, scalding them to death, indeed. Another shell from the ram struck the captain and tore

off his arm—he was wounded in no less than five different places that day. Another set fire to the ship. Had it not been that the monitor *Winnebago* gallantly interposed between the *Oneida* and the *Tennessee* the wooden ship and her consort would have been torn to pieces and sunk then and there.

The courage of the crew of the *Oneida* was beyond all praise. With the captain weltering in his blood, the ship on fire, the boilers exploding beneath them, the men below dying in agony, they stuck to their guns as coolly as if nothing were happening, deliberately firing upon the fort and the ram as long as they were within range. Helpless themselves, they were carried up the channel by the valiant efforts of their little consort, the *Galena*, and the inrushing tide, as Farragut had planned.

By and by they too reached the fleet and anchored. Stopping for nothing, Peyton took his boat and started at once for the admiral on the *Hartford*, swinging quietly at anchor above the middle ground. The guns had been secured, the decks washed clear of their blood-stains, and the wounded carried below to the busy surgeons doing what they could for them. On the port-side of the quarter-deck lay a long line of dead men. As Peyton stepped through the gangway he asked the officer there where the admiral was.

"There," replied the young man, pointing to the quarter-deck.

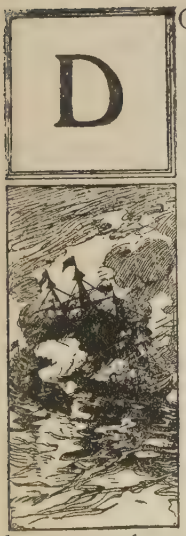
As Peyton went aft to report to him he saw him standing with his feet apart, his hands clasped behind his back, staring down at the bodies of the poor fellows

who had been killed in the action. Tears glistened in the old man's eyes, the young man noticed, as he looked at him.

The dauntless hero of one of the greatest naval battles of modern times was mourning like a woman over his lost men.

CHAPTER XLIII

THE LAST DASH OF THE TENNESSEE



DOWN under the guns of Fort Morgan lay the *Tennessee*. She had been lightly rammed by the *Monongahela*, and every ship of the fleet had poured a broad-side on her as she had attacked them in succession as they came up the channel, and on account of her slow speed they had left her behind as they passed. Admiral Buchanan deemed it proper, therefore, as it certainly was, to withdraw from the action until he could examine his vessel unmolested and ascertain if she had sustained any serious damage.

He found that although she had been struck possibly a hundred times by heavy projectiles mainly from the nine-inch broadside guns of the ships she had suffered no material injury save for a few holes through the smoke-stack, which could easily be repaired by her own force. After careful inspection her officers reported her otherwise to be in perfect condition.

The *Tennessee* was a casemated broad-side, iron-clad, two hundred and nine feet long, with a beam of forty-

eight feet. She was armed with six heavy Brook rifles, one-hundred-pounders each in round numbers, two in each broadside, one pivoted forward and one aft; her ports, of which there were ten, were so arranged that the fore and after pivots could be fought in either broadside. She was entirely a home production of the Confederacy. The ship was built at Selma, the guns came from Richmond, the iron plating was made at Mobile, from ore mined in Alabama. The casemate, a sort of deck-house with slanting sides, was plated with iron armor varying in thickness from four to six inches. The plating was carried in an unbroken slant below the water-line and then bent back inward to the hull, the knuckle angle so formed being filled with a solid wooden backing which was a great protection against ramming. From the bows of the *Tennessee* a formidable iron spur projected below the water-line. No wooden ship that floated could have survived a fairly delivered blow from that ram.

There were two or three fatal defects in her construction, however. Her engines were taken from an old river steamer and were wofully weak and inadequate; the method for closing her gun ports was faulty, and the shutters working on pivots were liable to jam; but the most serious error of her designers had been in exposing the rudder chains by which she was steered, on the open deck, without protection of any sort. In spite of these things, however, she was without doubt a great improvement on the *Merrimac*, of which she was a development, and she was the most formidable vessel afloat in any sea or under any flag.

By the time her inspection had been completed, and the few minor repairs necessitated by the action had been made, Farragut's fleet had reached the deep water above the middle ground, a shoal extending westward across the deep water, some four miles from Fort Morgan. The water in Mobile Bay is very shallow, but above the middle ground there is an expanse extending about four miles each way which was deep enough for the largest ships in the fleet. It was here that Farragut had anchored his battered fleet.

It was now about 8.45 in the morning. The decks had been scrubbed down, the watches piped to breakfast, and the ship carpenters, riggers and machinists, were busy making such temporary repairs as could be effected with the appliances at hand, when the lookouts discovered the *Tennessee* standing up the channel from the direction of Fort Morgan. The old admiral meant business, it was quite evident. The black smoke was belching from her tall stack as she came on single-handed to attack the twenty-three vessels in the Union fleet which had already successfully encountered the gunboats, the fort, and her own prowess.

At first sight this would appear to have been a foolhardy action, with so few chances of success as to render it virtual suicide on the part of the *Tennessee*, but Admiral Buchanan may be relieved of any charge of recklessness. He had commanded the *Merrimac* when she had routed the fleet in Hampton Roads. He knew, or thought he knew, what could be effected by an iron-clad against wooden ships. He had under him the most powerful vessel that had ever been con-

structed. He had been unable to make use of his greatest power of offence, the ram, in the passage of the ships through the narrow channel, but now he counted confidently upon using it to deadly advantage.

The ships above him were at anchor. He was between them and the open sea. His light draught would permit him to go anywhere, while they were strictly confined to the contracted deep-water area. He had shown himself invulnerable to their heaviest guns. He might now be able to get among them and work his will upon them. No sane man would think of matching a wooden ship against such an ironclad. It is true that there were three monitors with Farragut's fleet, but they had done nothing remarkable heretofore and he counted himself more than a match for any, or all, of them.

Again, the numbers of the enemy would give him a certain immunity. There were too many of them for all of them to attack him at once. Then, too, he would have the advantage of having all of his force concentrated under his single hand, while that of the Federals was scattered. These were some of the reasons which actuated him, and there was doubtless another. He had to do something. He could remain in safety under the walls of Fort Morgan for a time, but there he would be subjected to attack. Farragut would certainly attack him with the monitors, and the fall of the fort, which afforded him temporary protection from the investing force, was only a question of time. Everything bade him engage, and the de-

cision to do so was entirely in consonance with his character as a desperate and determined fighter, a man of splendid daring and courage. So that it was not without strong hopes for success that he turned the prow of his vessel up the bay, set his men to quarters, and made ready for his part in the most desperate naval engagement ever fought in the waters of the United States. Men would never forget the brazen effrontery of that Confederate ship and her captain!

But there was one thing upon which he did not count, which was his undoing in the end, and that was the invincible courage, the calculated recklessness, and the headlong dash of Admiral Farragut. He was the admiral who did the unexpected thing. And in so doing he took the only possible means to meet and master the danger. Any other course would have ruined his fleet and might have lost him the battle. In the mind of the admiral it was not a question of wood against iron, but ship against ship. He had already determined what he should do in case the *Tennessee* attacked as she was doing that morning. In pursuance of his preconcerted plan he threw his vessels, whatever they were, upon the iron-clad with furious intensity and reckless disregard of the consequences to the ships.

I know of no naval action in the history of the world in which both commanders were so old and so gallant. Both of these ancient veterans were heroes. Youth is the proverbial age of daring and achievement. Age is said to be cautious, timid. The lie was given to that idea that morning. Farragut and Buchanan,

both past three score, set an example of headlong, desperate, risk-taking valor to the most reckless boy in the squadron.

The instant the watchers on the long ships discovered the approach of the *Tennessee* the signal for battle was flown from the *Hartford*. The clanking of the chain cables running in through the hawse-pipes, as the anchors were dragged from their oozy beds by the eager men as they sprang to the capstan bars with as much alacrity as if they had not already engaged in a bloody battle that morning, was succeeded by the rolling of drums once more calling the depleted crews to their battle stations. Down in the engine-rooms, hot as an infernal region now, the exhausted firemen and coal-heavers with the engineers and machinists once more resumed their places. The engines were started at once, the ships gathered way, and this time under full head of steam, as fast as it could be made in the boilers, they opened out and made for the approaching enemy.

Signals were flying from the mast-head of the *Hartford* ordering the fleet to close in and ram the enemy. In the admiral's steam barge, *Loyall*, named for his son, a boat which he said was "the wettest devil he ever sailed in," Dr. Palmer, a noble volunteer, was hurrying from ship to ship repeating the signal and carrying verbal orders from the admiral; while from points of vantage on the flag-ship the army signal officers were transmitting messages to the different vessels of the fleet. The slow, unwieldy, lumbering monitors were also getting under way as rapidly as

the feverish impatience of their captains could be imparted to the almost immovable vessels.

The ship nearest the *Tennessee*, which was now close at hand, was the *Monongahela*, which had been especially provided with an iron prow with a heavy wooden backing for ramming purposes. The slight collision in the channel had done no harm to either vessel. Captain Strong was eager to see how the ram would stand the impact of his iron prow backed by two thousand tons of ship going at full speed. He confidently expected to cut her down or overrun her.

The *Tennessee* was headed straight for the *Hartford*. Buchanan rightly judged her to be the most important ship, and thought if he could dispose of her his terrible task would be materially lessened and a great advantage gained. Confident in the strength of his own ship, therefore, he disdained the approaching steamer; never swerving a hair's breadth from his course, he kept steadily on. He would bide the shock let it be what it would. His game was the noble *Hartford* and the great admiral.

Off on the port quarter the *Monongahela* under full speed rushed down upon the *Tennessee*, the water boiling and foaming under her fore-foot. Buchanan did not even shift his helm to avoid the blow. She struck him fair and square on the port quarter at right angles to his broad-side, a terrific blow. The two-thousand-ton wooden ship was literally hurled upon him. The crash was heard down on Fort Morgan. Men on both ships were thrown violently to the deck by the

force of the collision. The iron cut-water of the *Monongahela* was wrenched off and her bows stove in. The *Tennessee* swung around to port from the thrust of her enemy.

At the moment of impact the rifles in the casemate of the ram poured shells into the wooden vessel, piercing her through and through. The *Monongahela* swung around along-side her enemy and at contact range poured in a broadside of solid shot from her heavy battery, including two eleven-inch guns. The solid shot broke in pieces against the casemate or bounded back like balls. Except for a slight list to starboard, nothing happened to the *Tennessee*, which kept steadily on toward the *Hartford*.

Meanwhile from the same side came the *Lackawanna*, the fastest vessel in the Union fleet, at a speed of twelve knots an hour, which was very high for those days. She too was gallantly hurled upon the *Tennessee*, which she struck fair amidships to port. Captain Marchand had no iron cut-water, his ship had not been designed for ramming, no special provision had been made to enable her to stand such a shock. He did not hesitate on that account. With the admiral's command to warrant him, and under the eye of his great captain, he threw his ship on the enemy.

Such was the force of the blow that the bow of the *Lackawanna* was stove in from five feet above to three feet below the water-line. Owing to the slant of the casemate of the iron-clad, the shattered bows of the *Lackawanna*, her screws churning the water madly as Marchand strove to force her to override the ram,

actually rose out of the water and slid upward along the slanting iron-plated sides. Again the deadly rifles on the *Tennessee* rang out, raking the *Lackawanna* from bow to stern. As his ship slipped off Marchand swung to port and poured in another futile broadside from his heavy battery at close range upon his mighty and disdainful antagonist.

The monitors were closing in now, and the different vessels of the fleet heading toward the ram delivered broadsides or single shots as the shifting movements of the vessels gave them a clear range. The *Tennessee* was attacked by ships on both sides, and fore and aft as well. All of her guns were in action at the same instant. A mass of flame and smoke and roaring guns, she shook herself free and swept up the bay, and straight at her came the *Hartford.*

Both vessels were under full steam, and every available ounce of power was churning the screws. They approached each other bows on. The prolongation of their keels would have made a singularly straight line. If the *Tennessee* struck the *Hartford* in that way she would tear the whole bow out of her. Both vessels would be telescoped, the *Hartford* would infallibly sink, but she would overrun the *Tennessee* and it would be impossible for the iron-clad to back away before being carried down by the *Hartford.*

The officers of the squadron who could see through the smoke the two vessels rushing at each other fairly held their breath with anxiety and terror. Forward on the *Hartford,* leaning over the bows endeavoring to peer down through the smoke at his approaching

enemy, stood Drayton. Aft on the port mizzen rigging, standing on the sheer poles, clinging to the forward swifter, the admiral leaned far out watching ahead. The vigilant Watson had seen to it that another line had been passed about him as before, remonstrating vainly with the admiral for his exposed position as he did so. Going at such a speed, the two ships already fearfully near, the collision would only be a matter of time, and the results would be fatal to both vessels unless the helm of one or the other were shifted.

The flag-ship, save for the throb of the engines, was entirely silent. The officers forward waited for the shock, the men at the guns in the batteries shifted restlessly, the gun-captains tightened the lock-strings in their hands, wistful and hopeful that they could get a shot in before they went down, if down they must go. Everybody on the ship was of course aware of the situation, even though most of them could see nothing of it. McFarland, a veteran seaman, who had held the helm of the *Hartford* in every one of her tremendous battles, was at the wheel with two assistants. He was coolly steering the great ship with the mathematical nicety of an expert seaman.

"Quartermaster," called out the sharp voice of the admiral suddenly in the death-like silence, "keep her steady as she goes. Don't swerve a hair's breadth from your present course."

"Ay, ay, sir," answered the man at the wheel, as with beautiful accuracy he held the heaving vessel straight on her course.

A thrill of relief and anxiety went through the ship. The admiral would try it out then! Bully for the old fighter! He meant to sink the ram if he could even if he went down with her. The *Hartford* was trembling like an earthquake under the beating of her engines, leaping like a hound through the troubled waters. She was drawing nearer, nearer. Another moment they would be in contact, there would be a struggle for life in the water. Ah, what was that?

Just before reaching the *Hartford* the bow of the *Tennessee* swung to starboard. At the last moment Buchanan had concluded it would be wiser for him not to throw away his ship merely to sink the *Hartford*. He ported his helm suddenly, but not quickly enough to avoid the collision. Instead of striking fairly bows on, however, the *Hartford* struck the *Tennessee* on the port-bow. A few minutes before the *Manhattan* had delivered a bolt from her fifteen-inch gun fair on the port-side of the ram's casemate. It shattered the plating, broke the wooden backing, and sent a shower of splinters into the protection nets, but did not penetrate. As the *Hartford* rasped along the port broadside of the ram she poured a rapid fire upon the casemate from her nine-inch guns and one-hundred-pounder Parrott rifled pivots, at a distance of perhaps ten feet. None of her shot penetrated, although the casemate was racked by the blows and some of the port-shutters were jammed on their pivots, blocking the guns. As the two ships ground and rasped alongside each other the *Hartford's* guns, served with painful rapidity, roared out again. The marines and

small-arm men poured a rattling fire in at every port.

So close were they as they reeled and gritted together that from where he stood in the mizzen-rigging Farragut might have leaped aboard the ram. Meanwhile the fire of the *Hartford* was returned by the two broadside guns of the *Tennessee*. Heavy shells ripped through the flag-ship; one of them exploded sending a mass of splinters in every direction with terrible effect. One of these huge pieces of timber struck the head of Lieutenant Boyd Peyton, gallantly fighting his division. He was hurled senseless to the red deck of the *Hartford*.

The *Tennessee* was now sore beset. The *Chickasaw* had taken position under her stern, and with a rapidity of fire astonishing, when one considers that the guns were muzzle-loaders, she was pouring solid shot upon the ram. The *Monongahela* fiercely rammed her again on the starboard beam. Broadside after broadside had been hurled upon the casemate from the heavy nine-inch guns of the other ships now fairly surrounding her. She was a very centre of fire, a focal point of concentrated converging attack, in the midst of a battle vortex of destruction.

Steaming slowly ahead like a huge wild boar among hounds, she strove vainly to ram or shake off her opponents. Although no shot had penetrated, the damage had been great. The tremendous battering and ramming she had received caused her to leak badly. Her casemate was being so racked by the mighty hammering of the heavy shot that it was only

a question of time before the shell would penetrate, explode, and end it all. Her engines and machinery, bad at best, were working horribly now, and it was as much as life was worth to stay in the engine-room in the face of the repeated shocks of collision and gun-fire. All of the port-shutters had been jammed by shot, rendering it impossible to fire any of her guns. Still she would not give up.

Admiral Buchanan and a machinist were at one of the ports endeavoring to release a jammed shutter when a heavy shot from the *Hartford* struck the port-sill, and, exploding, tore the gunner into bits. A bit of iron driven in by the shell struck the leg of the admiral, fracturing it, and a shower of splinters did great damage.

The *Hartford* at the same time steamed away from the ram and made a circle to starboard in order to ram her again. As she completed the turn, and bore down upon the *Tennessee*, out of the smoke enshrouding the bay came the bows of the *Lackawanna*, also endeavoring to ram a second time. At full speed she bore down upon the port-quarter of the *Hartford*. There was a terrible sound of crashing timbers heard even above the roar of the guns as the two ships came together. In the awful impact the *Hartford* was hurled over nearly on her beam ends, and was cut down to within two feet of the water's edge. It was thought for a moment that the flag-ship was sinking.

The old admiral, with the agility of a boy, ran across the deck, leaped into the mizzen chains, and clambered down the sides to take in the extent of the

damage. Finding that the *Hartford* would still float, he sprang back to the deck and repeated his former order that she should ram the *Tennessee* again.

As the *Lackawanna* struck the *Hartford* a cry had arisen all over the flag-ship which touched Farragut more than perhaps anything that ever happened in his career.

"Save the admiral!" "Get the admiral out of the ship!" "Save the admiral!" rang out all over the *Hartford.*

But the admiral was in no need of saving then. Shattered and battered though she was, the *Hartford* was still rapidly approaching the *Tennessee,* by this time reduced to a mere wreck. The ram had not discharged a single gun since those she had fired into the *Hartford* at the moment of impact. Several of them had been disabled and others had been put out of action by the jamming of the port-shutters. The exposed rudder-chains had been shot away by the *Chickasaw,* and the relieving tackles, with which the attempt had been made to steer the ship, had met the same fate.

The decks of the *Tennessee* were swept by a perfect storm of shot from a dozen ships. No one could have ventured out there to repair the rudder-chains without meeting instant death. She could no longer be steered. She drifted on completely surrounded by the ships, which were pouring in broadsides upon her with relentless and increasing fury. Then the last misfortune overtook her. A shot from the *Chickasaw* or the *Manhattan* carried away her racked and battered

smoke-stack. It broke short off just below the top of the casemate, and the smoke poured into the casemate, nearly suffocating the men; the temperature, over one hundred degrees at best, rose to over a hundred and twenty! Minus the stack, her fires went down, and she could not make enough steam to drive the engines. She rolled like a helpless log in the water. She could neither steam, nor steer, nor fire. It was hot as hell itself in the casemate, and the temperature of the fire-room was past belief. The men were almost asphyxiated in the thickening black smoke. The pounding of the shot on the armor never stopped for a second. And that armor could no longer protect her. Her men were suffocating, fainting, dying. Her admiral was wounded and helpless. Several of her men had been killed outright and many wounded. The *Ossipee,* running at full speed, was almost upon her. The *Hartford* was bearing down once more. The little *Kennebec* was gallantly dashing at her. The monitors were closing in. They were making an anvil, a chopping-block, out of her.

Everything exposed had been shot away long since, including the flag-staff. Farragut's tactics had prevailed. He had simply overwhelmed the ram. She had not enjoyed a single opportunity to use her most effective weapon—the ram. She had been mobbed, rammed, hammered to pieces by the wooden ships. She had been racked and shattered by the monitors. Captain Johnston, consulting with the wounded and helpless Admiral Buchanan, finally determined upon her surrender. With a heroism which was only matched

by the way he had fought against overwhelming odds, until he was absolutely without means for offence or defence, he fastened a white flag to a gun-rammer and sprang out upon the deck or top of the casemate in the midst of that awful storm of shot and shell.

One by one as the Union ships saw the black, smoke-grimed, powder-stained figure waving the white flag on the top of the ram they ceased their fire and drew off. The *Ossipee*, however, had too much way to stop. Though her engines were reversed and her helm shifted, she struck the ram a slight blow after she had surrendered. The last effort of the Confederates was over. For one long hour the great *Tennessee* had heroically fought the whole mighty Union fleet—and in vain. And to the admiral's wife, this letter, written that same day while the excitement of success was still upon him, carried the tidings.

MOBILE BAY, August 5, 1864.

The Almighty has smiled upon me once more. I am in Mobile Bay. The *Tennessee* and Buchanan are my prisoners. He has lost his leg. It was a hard fight, but Buck met his fate manfully. After we passed the forts, he came up in the ram to attack me. I made at him, and ran him down, making all the others do the same. We butted and shot at him until he surrendered. The *Selma* was annoying us, but I sent Jouett (*Metacomet*) after him, who in a short time brought his colors down. But, sad to say, the *Tecumseh* was sunk by a torpedo, and poor Craven with his gallant crew went to the bottom. I have lost a number of fine fellows, more than ever before. Lieutenant Adams was wounded. Mr. Heginbotham

will probably lose a leg. [He afterward died.] Johnston, who married Miss P., commanded the *Tennessee*. They made a gallant fight, but it was all to no purpose.

My ship is greatly cut up—twenty-five killed and twenty-eight wounded. I escaped, thank God, without a scratch.

God bless you, and make you as thankful for this victory as I am.

D. G. FARRAGUT.

And this is the general order to the fleet which the splendid old admiral published the next morning:

UNITED STATES FLAGSHIP HARTFORD,
MOBILE BAY, August 6, 1864.

The admiral returns thanks to the officers and crews of the vessels of the fleet for their gallant conduct during the fight of yesterday.

It has never been his good fortune to see men do their duty with more courage and cheerfulness; for, although they knew that the enemy was prepared with all devilish means for our destruction, and though they witnessed the almost instantaneous annihilation of our gallant companions in the *Tecumseh* by a torpedo, and the slaughter of their friends, mess-mates, and gun-mates on our decks, still there were no evidences of hesitation in following their commander-in-chief through the line of torpedoes and obstructions, of which we knew nothing, except from the exaggerations of the enemy, who had given out "That we should all be blown up as certainly as we attempted to enter."

For this noble and implicit confidence in their leader he heartily thanks them.

D. G. FARRAGUT,
Rear-Admiral Commanding W. G. B. Squadron.

BOOK V

"THE STRIFE IS O'ER"

CHAPTER XLIV

WITH ALL THE HONORS OF WAR

AS the *Hartford* rounded to on the side of the surrendered iron-clad Admiral Farragut called for Lieutenant Peyton to go aboard and receive the surrender.

"Sir," said Watson, to whom he had given the order, "Lieutenant Peyton was struck by a splinter from the last shot of the *Tennessee,* and the surgeon fears he cannot live an hour."

The glory and the joy of the great victory almost vanished from the admiral's mind when this was told to him, for he had loved the young man as if he had been his own son. He put his hand across his face for a moment, and his lips murmured a word or two, although when he took his hand away to give his orders he spoke in his usual calm tone of voice, such was his power of restraint.

A few moments later a black, powder-stained, dirty, soiled, grimy figure clambered up the side of the *Hartford* with Admiral Buchanan's sword in his hand. As he gave it to Farragut, with the statement that the admiral was too badly wounded to come aboard him-

self and present his sword in person, he hesitated a moment and looked imploringly at him.

"What is your name, young sir?" asked the old man, struck by some look of resemblance in the other's face, in his bearing, in spite of his appearance.

"Peyton, sir—Willis Peyton, lieutenant on the *Tennessee*, sir. My—brother—he is on the *Hartford*, sir? Is—he—well?"

"My poor boy," said the admiral, kindly, taking him by the hand, "I am sorry to say——"

"Sir—sir, is he killed?"

"Grievously wounded, Mr. Peyton. Struck by a splinter from the last shot fired by your ship."

"My God!" exclaimed Willis, "and I fired that gun myself!"

A look of painful commiseration spread over the admiral's rugged features. As Willis reeled back, throwing his hands up to his head as he realized his part in the awful tragedy, the old man put out his hand quickly and caught him.

"Brace up, my lad," he said, "you are not responsible. 'Tis only the fortune of war."

"May I—we are your prisoners, sir, but——"

"Go to him at once, sir. Mr. Whiting, take Mr. Peyton below to see his brother."

On a cot in the cockpit, in the dim recesses of the ship, his own stateroom having been crushed in and demolished by the collision between the *Hartford* and the *Lackawanna*, lay Boyd Peyton. He had been struck over the head by a heavy timber ripped from its fastenings by the explosion of the shell, and had

sustained a fracture of the skull and a severe concussion of the brain. He lay perfectly still and motionless, and as white as death, save for the bloody bandages across his forehead. His faint breathing alone told the watchers that he was alive. In the hurry of the action, after a hasty inspection and a temporary dressing of his wounds, thinking his case hopeless, the doctors had devoted their attention to others whose demands were more pressing. But these having been attended to, they were now busy over Peyton. Except for that slow, feeble rise and fall of his bare breast he looked as one already dead.

Willis was a soldier. He had fought his country's battles for four years, he had seen many people wounded and killed in action; death and the dying were grimly familiar to him as they were to everyone in those days, especially in the South. He had been trained to conceal his emotions in the rough school of war. He had a man's pride in such concealment; yet, as he stood there, a grimy, sooted, smoke-stained figure, with the soil of the battle clinging to him, staring down at the white face of his brother, red-crowned in his own blood, a deep groan broke from his lips. It had never been his brother before, but somebody else's—there was a difference. The attendants, the surgeon's mates, drew back respectfully; the doctor from where he knelt by the cot looked up at him.

"It's Peyton's brother," said Whiting, briefly; "from the *Tennessee*, you know."

"Will he live? Is there any chance?" asked Willis, hoarsely.

The doctor stared up at him pityingly. An evasion trembled on his lips. He checked it.

"You are a man, sir," he replied, shaking his head. "I'll be honest with you. There is only one chance in a thousand, in a million. That last shell did the business. Strange! For he actually passed the fort three times in a hell of fire, once and back again in the *Metacomet's* boat, and then up in the *Oneida*, and never got a scratch until that last shot."

"I fired that shot!" burst from the lips of the man kneeling over his brother. "I was in command of the forward division of the *Tennessee*. O Doctor, for God's sake, give me some hope! Don't let me feel that I have killed my own brother! Why, Doctor," he went on, incoherently, forgetful that none knew of the circumstances to which he referred in his agitation, "when they all turned against him on the porch because he would go North I alone had a good word for him. I was only a boy, father forbade it, but I—I kissed him good-by—kissed him, and now I have killed him!"

"The fortune of war, my lad," said Dr. Palmer, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder as the admiral had done.

Ah, how many bitter things, how many unbearable things, for which we are responsible, wring from us that futile confession, force us to that craven evasion, and take a coward's shelter behind that easy proverbial saying, "the fortune of war!"

"Damn the fortune of war!" cried Willis, hotly, scarcely knowing what he said. "I am sick of hearing

it! It has been flung into the ears of people bereft until it has become a ghastly mockery. I want my brother!"

"My lad," said a quiet voice behind him.

Willis turned to face the old admiral, standing hat in hand by the bedside of his dying officer.

"Do you realize," continued Farragut, "how many thousands of people have stood beside one stricken, as we are standing, and have cried for a brother, a husband, a son, a father, as you are doing?"

"Yes, yes; they were not my brother, though."

"But someone's brother," returned the admiral, gravely. "O friends, the misery this awful war has brought upon this land!"

"Who is responsible for it?" cried Willis, fiercely.

"Nay, lad," said the old man, calmly, "that is a question into which I cannot enter, not with you, at any rate. I know my own duty as you know yours and I try to do it as you do. Pity 'tis that only war can teach us that we are our brothers' keepers. Poor boy," he added, looking down at the unconscious Peyton, "is there no hope for him, Dr. Palmer?"

"I see little—none, sir."

"Poor boy," repeated the old admiral, tears welling to his eyes, "to have given up everything and have come to this! 'Greater love hath no man than this,' " he quoted, softly, " 'that a man lay down his life——' "

"Admiral Farragut, for God's sake, sir," burst out Willis, suddenly, "let me take him home! I am a prisoner, sir, but I will give you my word of honor—

you must know something of the honor of the Peytons since you knew my brother——"

"I know, and it will serve."

"I will do nothing, sir, bear no arms, commit no overt act, until I am exchanged, sir, if you will let me take him home—home to Mobile, to my mother, to my sister!"

"And to Mary Annan," interrupted the old man, softly.

"What! You know her, sir?"

"Nay, he told me of her, poor girl!"

"She is not in Mobile."

"Where then?"

"In Fort Morgan. She went down there last night, sir."

"Great heavens, sir! For what?"

"I think to see her little brother, who is badly wounded."

"Another!" said the admiral, mournfully. "Poor girl, I hope nothing has happened to her."

"I pray not, sir, but who can tell? Won't you let me go, sir?"

The admiral turned aside and walked forward a few feet. He leaned against the bulkhead and thought deeply for a moment. Some might consider it a stretch of authority. Well, he would do it.

"You may have him," he said at last, "Dr. Palmer consenting to the removal."

"It matters little," said the doctor, "whether he goes or stays."

"We can at least bury him on—in his own land, sir—

the land he loved, though he fought against it," urged Willis.

"Ay, lad, that is true. Last night in my cabin we talked it over. He loved the South as I, as we all do. Take him, then, all that is left of him. Say to your mother, with my deepest sympathy, that I have known many officers in my long life on the sea, none braver, none better. Tell your father when you meet him how worthily his son—nay, let me say it for both of you—how worthily both his sons upheld the ancient name and the ancient honor of the Peytons."

"Thank you, sir," said the young man, deeply touched. "They will value those words," he added, spontaneously, "from the greatest captain of the sea. I will go over to the *Tennessee*, sir, with your permission, and make ready."

"Do so. You shall have the *Loyall*, my own steam-barge, under a flag of truce, to take you up to the city. Give my compliments, nay, my affectionate regard, to your own brave admiral. I am sorry he is wounded, and tell him I am sending him my own fleet-surgeon to look at him. You'll go, Palmer? And Mr. Peyton, congratulate him for me for his splendid fight, and ask him if there is anything I can do for him or his men now. After the battle, thank God, we are no longer enemies, but brethren. By Jove, 'twas like Old Buck to come single-handed out against us all! 'Tis the old navy spirit, the old fighting blood, that made us what we are, gentlemen," he added, as he turned to the ladder and followed Willis Peyton to the deck.

In a few moments the young officer, having hastily removed some of the evidences of battle from his person and changed his soiled uniform, came on deck once more. The little *Loyall* had swung alongside. Ready hands had rigged a whip on the main yard-arm of the *Hartford*, and the cot with its silent occupant lay on the deck ready to be swayed up and lowered into the barge. One of the junior surgeons was to accompany them to see the patient safely delivered on shore. But that was not all.

The crew were lined up in the gangways, the marines drawn up on the quarter-deck, the admiral and his staff and other officers stood aft on the poop. As Peyton was lowered into the *Loyall* the marines presented arms, the seamen and their officers took off their hats; there were flourishes of trumpets, three rolls of the drums, and the shrilling of the boatswain and his mates piping the side with their whistles, as if it had been a flag-officer departing. As the barge moved away the admiral, hat in hand, the wind blowing across his bared head, stepped to the side, looked down at the two brothers, and called out in a voice heard in the stillness throughout the ship:

"Good-by, sir, and may God bless you."

And in a silence more eloquent than if the love of his fellows had been voiced in cheers Boyd Peyton left the ship in which with his admiral he had gained an immortal name.

Far down on Fort Morgan a woman stood, with a little group of officers around her; a woman filled with

a consuming present grief and with dread forebodings of another. She stood on the grassy rampart over the casemate, where under a sheet lay the still form of her little brother, watching the battle between the ships and the *Tennessee;* standing like many another woman—nay, like the South itself—over the grave of dead hopes, lost illusions, vanished dreams, watching the battle going against them!

"It's all up," said General Peyton at last, dropping his glass; "the firing is over. The ram has surrendered. Our last hope is gone. Good God, to think it has come to this! I wonder if any hurt has come to Willis." He hesitated; no one had ever heard him mention the name of his eldest son since that day he drove him from the porch—"or to Boyd," he added at last. "Good God, both my boys, both my boys!"

He turned and walked slowly away.

"General Peyton," said Pleasants, venturing to break his reverie, "I suppose you will want to send the news of this morning's battle up to General Maury, since the telegraph line has been cut or broken?"

"Yes, sir," said the general, "the *Morgan* yonder," pointing to the gun-boat, "is still serviceable. I shall endeavor to get word to General Maury by her tonight. Captain Harrison thinks he can avoid the fleet and get past safely by keeping close in shore. At any rate he will try it."

"I shall of course wish to return to my duty in her, sir."

"By all means, Colonel. Let Dr. Bampney go too, and Mary Annan as well. You may take her brother's body with you also. They will want to bury him beside his father, poor lad. You may possibly be captured, but you certainly will be captured if you remain here. If they land a force behind the point and bring their ships around the fort nothing can prevent our being battered to pieces."

"And if we are captured, General, we shall have one friend among the enemy—your son," continued Pleasants, boldly, as he turned away.

"Have you no word, no message, for him, sir?" asked Mary Annan, who had listened listlessly to the conversation.

"What, Mary Annan!" cried the old man. "Do you plead for him?"

They were alone together for the moment.

"I love him," she whispered. "Oh, my God, I love him! Can't you send him some word?"

The old general bit his lip.

"No," he said, "I cannot. I wish him no ill. I pray to God that he may have been spared in battle, but I cannot forget that it was he, and such as he, to whom we owe our defeat. The South has been beaten by her sons, ma'am."

"Some word, sir, some word. Think!" pleaded the girl. "He is your own son. He followed his idea of honor. He did his duty. What is right or wrong each man must judge. They told me that you saw him in a little boat out yonder, and that you did not fire upon him."

"'Twas because he was saving life," interrupted the old soldier, sternly.

"Aren't you proud of his courage?"

"Yes, of course, but not of his principles."

"Won't you send just one word?"

"Not one, except that I hope he has not been hurt."

"Won't you ever forgive him?"

"Never!"

"Not when I—not if—if—I plead with you as his——"

"Not if an angel in heaven pleads; not yet. Forgive me, Mary Annan; say no more. It pains me to say no, yet I must."

The old general did not chop and change, he had been too deeply wounded, he had thought too bitterly of his son's defection for that. He had been, he was, proud of him though, and some day the girl knew that if they were all spared the boy would find his place in his father's heart open to him once more.

CHAPTER XLV

HOW BOYD PEYTON CAME HOME AGAIN

SWIFTLY up the bay sped the little steamer, the white flag at the fore, the Stars and Stripes aft. Silently under the awning sat two men by the stretcher on which Boyd Peyton lay, Willis and the assistant surgeon. Past the guard-boats, past the obstructions, up to the wharf at the foot of Government Street they came. Long since the news had spread that a boat flying the Union flag, and under a flag of truce, was coming up the bay. By the time the *Loyall* tied up at the wharf a great crowd of people had assembled, mostly women and children and old men. At the wharf were several officers from General Maury's staff. Willis Peyton was the first man to step ashore. His face was white and haggard. He could hardly nerve himself for the ordeal through which he was about to pass.

"By heavens, it's Willis Peyton!" cried a voice in the crowd. "You came from Fort Morgan, sir?" asked Colonel Craighead, General Maury's chief of staff.

"No, sir, from the *Tennessee*."

"And the battle?"

"The Union ships passed the forts, captured the *Selma,* sank the *Gaines*——"

"And the *Tennessee*——?"

"Engaged the Union fleet, single-handed, after the passage, and was captured after being battered into a helpless wreck?"

"She surrendered, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why are you here, Mr. Peyton?"

"I am a prisoner of war on parole, sir."

"And you came——?"

"To bring the body of my brother home——"

"You mean——?"

"He was wounded on the *Hartford.*"

"Is he dead?"

"No, sir, but soon will be. Admiral Farragut gave me permission to bring him home—to die."

While this little colloquy had been carried on the blue-jackets on the launch, under the direction of the surgeon and the ensign who commanded her, had gently lifted the stretcher bearing the wounded man out on the wharf.

"Friends," said Willis Peyton, facing the crowd, "you hated my brother because in accordance with what he thought his duty he went with the North. He is dying now. Will someone help to carry him up the street to his home?"

"Let the damned traitor die where he lies!" broke forth a rude voice charged by some bitter heart.

"My men will carry him up under the flag, Mr. Peyton," said the ensign in command of the boat, quickly.

"No, no!" burst from the crowd, as one man or another pushed forward, "we will take him ourselves. Southern hands for a Southern sailor."

The mordant words of the first speaker had awakened all that was good in the multitude.

"We have no love to spare for him or his cause," cried one, "but we have no animosity for a dying man. He has fallen in the line of his duty."

"He's of our people though he fought against us," exclaimed a third.

"Right," cried another old man, "I knew him of old, and a braver, truer man does not—did not—live. And as for you, sir," he added, turning to the man who had cursed and sworn, "if I hear any more remarks like that from you, old as I am, I will slap your mouth for you. I believe you are a damned Yankee anyway. Come, we will take him home."

"Tell me of the fort, sir," said Colonel Craighead, as Willis motioned to the men who had volunteered to pick up the stretcher.

"It still stands and seems to have suffered but little from the bombardment. But," he whispered to the officer, "its fall is only a question of time."

Willis spoke a few words of thanks and a farewell to the surgeon and the ensign of the *Loyall*, and watched them for a moment as they turned the prow of the boat to the southward and sped away to the fleet. Then he took his place by the litter and directed the bearers to go on. The crowd opened a way before them as they carried it up the street. Here was the body of their enemy. More than one suspected that

he might have piloted the fleet upon them, realizing his intimate knowledge of the harbor. They knew the family too well to doubt that he had fought bravely and well. The fact that he lay there apparently dying was evidence that he had been in the thick of the battle. They had mocked and scorned him and hated him when he had chosen to leave them and remained true to his flag. His father had cast him off, the people had approved and honored the old man for his action; but the animosity was gone from their hearts now. Animosities vanished before that stretched-out figure. Restless movements subsided. The sullen murmurs and mutterings died away and a deep silence supervened. Hats were pulled from heads. Awe fell over the multitude. Women put their hands over their eyes.

A little company of home guards, ordered there to control any possible disturbance, was standing at the curb. The officer in command hesitated a moment.

"By God," he said, "I'll do it!"

He faced about, uttered a command, and the company presented arms. The colors were dipped, too, the Stars and Bars were lowered to valor, to manhood, to honor, to death, even though they had been exhibited upon the other side.

In silence and sorrow, with every military honor, Boyd Peyton had left his ship. In silence and in sorrow, with every military honor also, he came back to his home, the home of his childhood, the home of his enemies, the home of his mother.

CHAPTER XLVI

SAD HOURS AT ANNANDALE

IT was early in the morning of the day after the battle. The *Morgan* had successfully slipped past Farragut's fleet in the night, and while it was yet dark had run along-side the St. Francis Street wharf at Mobile. Her arrival had not been reported, and no one but the sentry on guard was there to welcome the vessel. Mary Annan had stayed on the gun-boat until day-break at Colonel Pleasants's earnest request. The captain had given her his cabin and she had lain down during the passage, or at least after they had passed the Federal fleet, but she had been unable to sleep or take any rest.

Pleasants, who had gone ashore immediately, came back to the boat at sunrise with a conveyance for her and Dr. Bampney, and another one for the body of her brother. It was broad daylight when they drove up to the doorway at Annandale. Where before there had been troops of servants to welcome her or her guests, now she had to wait and ring the bell of her own home before the one or two faithful retainers remaining to her presented themselves.

The men, with the assistance of the drivers, carried

the body of the little master of the ancient house into the great parlor and left it there. After seeing everything disposed properly, Mary Annan, bidding the clergyman and the officer to go into the sitting-room to partake of such refreshments as the blockade permitted her housekeeper to offer them, turned to ascend the stairs. She had scarcely put foot upon them when the door of the landing above them opened and a woman came out. It was Pink Peyton.

"Mary Annan," she cried, and the next moment, discerning a tall figure behind her, she ran down the stairs with a scream of rapture and relief and fell into Pleasants's arms.

"Oh, thank God, thank God, you are safe!" she cried; "and my father?"

Before Pleasants could answer, Mrs. Peyton followed her daughter.

"General Peyton?" she cried.

"Well, madam."

"His wound?"

"A trifle."

"God be praised!" ejaculated the woman, brokenly.

"The general is safe, and Willis. If only——"

"And what of Boyd?" cried Mary Annan, sharply, instantly suspicious of the pause.

"My poor child," said Mrs. Peyton, coming down the stairs and taking the girl by the hand.

"Oh, what is it? Have you news of him?"

"He is here, sister," cried Tempe, bursting upon them and clasping her sister in her arms, "he is in here —in your room upstairs."

"Hush! hush!" said old Dr. Bampney, catching the child in his arms, "don't you see how you alarm your sister?"

Indeed, the shock of the news was almost too much for the woman. She divined instantly that Boyd Peyton would never be there in Mobile, in her house, unless something terrible had happened to him. Could it be that he was dead?

"How came he here?" asked Mary Annan, leaning back against the wall.

"Willis brought him up yesterday under a flag of truce."

"Is he—wounded?"

Madam Peyton bowed her head.

"Badly?"

"Oh, awfully, Sister Mary! Dr. Venosste says he will soon be dead, like brother," Tempe broke out again. "Did you bring poor brother back with you?" she asked, her little face filled with pain.

"Is it true?" whispered the girl, disregarding her little sister in her consuming anxiety.

"Yes, I fear so," answered Mrs. Peyton, taking the girl in her arms. "Oh, Mary, dear, only God can save him."

"Is he conscious?"

"No, he has not spoken since—since he was wounded."

"What is it?"

"A fracture of the skull and concussion of the brain. Dr. Venosste says that even if he recovers he might be—he might not—his mind— O God! O

God!" wailed the older woman—and she looked old indeed now—"that this should come upon us! And we sent him away on the porch that day! His father drove him from us, and this is how he has come back to us! If he could only know that he is home again, that we love him once more, and that we forgive him! If he could only know that no matter where he goes, or what he does, he is my boy, my boy!"

"We were all wrong," said the girl, brokenly. "We all drove him away—I, as well as the rest, and I loved him, too. I love him now—now that it is too late! May I see him? Take me to him."

There on the bed, her own bed, he lay. They had taken him to her room, that room with the window looking out toward the sunny south, where she had looked and watched, waited and listened, longed and hoped. She stood by his side dry-eyed and desperate. This was the last blow that could have fallen upon her. She thought she had reached the sum of human endurance long since, but she knew now that fate had done its worst for her on that day and not before. Father, brother, lover, all gone, and now this one too!

The mocking-bird sang in the great live-oak outside the window. He did not hear. Stretching out her hands to him, she called him again and again. He did not hear. The long-pent-up feelings of her bosom rushed to her lips at last. With every endearment that the deepest passion could dictate she appealed to him. He did not hear, he did not heed.

The others stood about the bed. She did not care, if indeed she were conscious of their presence, whether

they heard or did not hear the vows of her heart. But presently she became aware of a haggard figure standing next her. It was Willis Peyton.

"O Willis!" she cried, "you have nothing to reproach yourself with. You kissed him good-by with friendly words when we all turned against him."

"I fired the shot," said the young man, "that struck him down! My brother's blood is upon my hands; O God, he can't die, he can't!" he cried, in feverish anxiety and agitation.

"Hush!" said the girl, "don't reproach yourself for that. We are all brethren. We are all guilty. You could not know. It was not your fault, but mine, and every other man's and woman's who urged secession. Do you remember how in this very house that day at dinner I—we all cried for war? We were mad, mad! And well have we been paid. Oh, the South, and the North, and the East, and the West, what are they to me? Secession, State rights, the Union? I'd give them all for him! It was that night he kissed me. Oh, Boyd, Boyd, speak to me! Look at me just once—just for one moment! Say that you forgive me! I am guilty too. Oh, merciful God, let him live! Do not take him as well! All are gone from me now. Let me have one, just this one! No, no, he cannot, he shall not, die! Dr. Venosste," she said turning suddenly to the old man who had just entered the room, "is there no hope at all? Can't you do something? Is there nothing——"

"My dear child," said the old man, "he is in God's hands. All that my human skill and knowledge can

do has been done. My colleagues who have seen him have pronounced his case hopeless. For myself I think there is a little chance, but—well, I will tell you all—if he does recover the probabilities are—that—that his mind will be affected."

"I would rather see him dead than that!"

"And I," added his mother.

"Oh, if he could only know that I love him, or if I could only know that he cared before——"

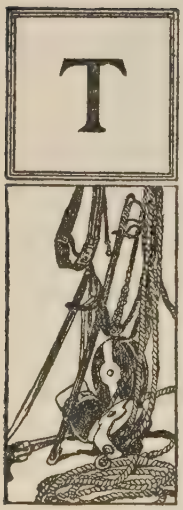
"You may know, dear," said the older woman, "I found this letter in his jacket. It was addressed to me, and this to you was inclosed in it."

"Give it to me," cried the girl taking it eagerly from the hand of Madam Peyton.

"Oh," she whispered, as she tore open the envelope, a little flicker of light in her sad face as she read it rapidly, "I thank God for this mercy at least. He loves me, he loves me! Oh, Dr. Venosste, we will call him back! He shall speak again! His eyes shall open! And his mind, like his heart, will be true. God could not deny it to love like ours!"

CHAPTER XLVII

BOYD PEYTON SEES A VISION



THE first thing of which Boyd Peyton was conscious was the song of a bird. The high, clear notes seemed to beat in upon his personality. They came to him apparently from afar off, from a great distance. They stole into his consciousness, through his dull and drowsy ear, with increasing vibration and volume. He wondered vaguely what it could be. The melody pleased him. It was reminiscent of something sweet in the memory. He lay with a delicious sense of rest and peace, and let the music permeate his tired soul.

Presently it burst upon him that the sound came from the full throat of a mocking-bird. A mocking-bird! That recalled Mary Annan to him. He lay quiet and still, thinking vaguely of her. There was a strange indisposition to move in his mind as he thought of her. Fragments of ideas, bits of recollection, whirled about in his head. They began to assemble by degrees and take shape—her shape. He could see her at last, beautiful, winning—kind! He hesitated to open his eyes, fearing lest he should dispel the vision.

After a while the song stopped and the figure faded away. He opened his eyes and looked about him. He saw things dimly through a whirl of mist and motion. He could not recognize or localize objects, but he could perceive enough to know that this was not his berth, or state-room, on the *Hartford*. He missed the heaving of the ship. The place was strangely motionless. Instead of the smell of tar and paint a delicious fragrance filled the room, a fragrance that like the mocking-bird called up the days of the past, hours of youth and love, and Mary Annan.

Where was he? Ah, it was a room. There before him, framed in white draperies, was an opening. Presently he made out a green mass of foliage beyond, a live-oak, stirred by the gentle breeze. He was lying upon a bed, he discovered. Whose room could it be? What had happened? He remembered by and by the roar of the cannon, the beating throb of the mighty engines, the crash of timbers, the scream of shells. He had been on the *Hartford*. Yes, that was it, with the great admiral. They were approaching the *Tennessee*. He had the lock-string of the forward pivot in his hand. He had pulled it. Then what had happened?

He thought deeply. At last he arrived at the conclusion that he had been wounded. Where had he been wounded? He felt a strange inability to move hand or foot, apparently, yet he seemed to feel that he possessed all his members. He happened to turn his eyes upward in his speculations, and the white line of a bandage showed dimly across his brow above

them. What did that mean? A blow on the head, perhaps. Yes, that was it. He had been struck on the head.

What had they done to him? Where was he now? In a house somewhere on the shore evidently. But whose house and where? It could not be Pensacola, it was not the hospital there, nor the fort. What could it be? Had the admiral—ah, was it Mobile? Mobile and Mary Annan? What was that sound? A footstep on the floor, a dark figure bent over him. He heard voices. Surprise, relief, anxiety in their tones. They were saying something. He strove desperately to catch the meaning. It had been so long since he had heard and recognized a voice. What were they saying?

"His eyes are open. I believe he is conscious at last. Willis, call Dr. Venosste at once."

He knew now. It was his mother's voice. And that other, who had cried, "Thank God!" as he hurried from the room, was his brother.

"Mother," he whispered.

Another figure approached him, hung over him, swam into the field of his vision. Eyes that he had dreamed of looked love into his own, a voice that he could never forget called his name.

"Mary Annan," he whispered, joyously, wonderingly, fearfully, and then fainted away into insensibility again. The shock of her presence had caused him to lose consciousness once more.

As the light went out of his eyes the woman who had bent over him with such rapture in her heart as an

Another figure approached him, hung over him.

angel in heaven might have envied was paralyzed with terror. Had God given him sight of her, knowledge of her, recognition of her, had strength been bestowed upon him to call her name, merely that he should die in the recognition?

Dr. Venosste speedily reassured the two women by telling them that such things often happen in concussions of the brain. Any sudden shock after consciousness had been recovered was apt to throw the patient into unconsciousness again, but the recovery therefrom would be speedy and sure unless the shock were too great.

For the first time the old doctor stated that unless complications ensued Peyton would get well. And better still, when he learned of that flash of recognition, he said that his mind would be clear as well. Such a siege as the women had gone through with him can scarcely be imagined. They had been sustained by that wonderful power which enables women to bear strains and fatigues which would kill the strongest man out of hand. It was not until now, when the doctor had given them the first definite ray of hope, that they realized what they had gone through, and how utterly worn out they were.

Summer had faded away into autumn and winter was fast approaching when Boyd Peyton was at last pronounced out of danger.

CHAPTER XLVIII

MARY ANNAN BEGS FORGIVENESS

WEAK, feeble, almost helpless, a ghost of himself, in fact, Boyd Peyton was yet on the royal road to recovery. After his first sight of her he had seen nothing more of Mary Annan. When Dr. Venosste had assured her that he would get well his mother had gone away, and he had not seen her either. Fort Morgan had fallen after an heroic defence, before the combined assaults of ships and army, but its flag had not come down until it had been hammered to ruins by the fierce bombardment and not a gun had been left serviceable. General Peyton had been sent North as a prisoner of war and Madame Peyton had accompanied him. Willis had been exchanged and was now with General Maury's army defending Mobile. The care of the Annandale household had been left to Pink and little Tempe, for when Boyd Peyton's recovery had seemed assured Mary Annan had given way under the strains and anxieties and bereavements she had sustained. She had borne up heroically so long as there had been any doubt and so long as there had been need for her, but when assurance came that

her lover's life would be spared she had given way completely.

Poor Pink, encouraged and cheered by brief visits from Pleasants whenever his duties permitted him to come across to Mobile, and assisted by one or two of the old slaves who still remained faithful, had done nobly by the sufferers. Dr. Bampney had been kindness itself, but there were many sick and there was much suffering in Mobile during those last months of close and final blockade, and he could only give them a small portion of his time. So Pink had mainly been compelled to worry along alone! Utterly unused to responsibilities of any kind, she had risen to the situation nobly, and the two patients owed their lives to her vigilant attention.

Peyton had begged so hard and so constantly to see Mary Annan that Dr. Venosste had at last given his permission. The girl had been miserably ill, but was now somewhat better, and the old doctor hoped that the interview might benefit them both. Willis and Pleasants had come that afternoon to carry him into her room. Peyton had insisted upon being dressed in his uniform as a United States naval officer, his clothing having been sent him under a flag by the thoughtfulness of the old admiral, before he went North on a well-earned leave of absence. He had a strange fancy that if she loved him she must take him in the uniform of the Union. It was in that uniform that she had rejected him. It was in it that she must take him back. Willis and Pleasants found him ready when they came.

Willis had never ceased to be thankful that his brother's life had been spared. He never would forget the sensations that had come over him when he had learned that he had fired that shot that had stricken him down. He would have cheerfully given his own life a dozen times for his brother's if there had been no other way to save him. The affection between the two young men was very strong indeed. Boyd had never forgotten that Willis alone of his family had bidden him God-speed when he went from Mobile years before. And Pleasants, whom he had always liked, and who was betrothed to his sister, who had been good to Mary Annan, had been very kind to him also. He was glad to see the young men, but he could scarcely wait until they lifted him up in the wicker chair to carry him into the room, that had been her father's, where Mary Annan lay.

The two men set the chair down close to the side of the bed. Then with a word of cheer to the sick woman they turned and left the room.

"Now, remember, Boyd," said Dr. Venosste, "only a few moments I will allow you, and you must not say anything to agitate yourselves. Come, Miss Pink," he added, turning to the faithful girl, and the two went out, leaving Peyton and Mary Annan alone.

Poor Mary Annan, how thin and pale and haggard she looked, her white face framed in the rich brown curls flowing over the pillow; how wasted from her long illness, from the shocks she had undergone, from the bereavements she had suffered, the heartbreaks

that had come upon her. How different she was from the gay, lightsome, cheerful young girl of those days before the awful war had come. And yet he loved her more. He could not tell how or why. He neither argued nor justified nor explained. He was simply cognizant of the fact. His heart yearned toward her. He did not say anything at first, nor did she. She lay staring up at him out of her great black eyes—how they shone out of her pale face then—with such a look of utter thankfulness and gratitude in her face as a sinner might show in being admitted to heaven. He bent forward in the chair and with his own thin hands clasped her thinner and slenderer one.

"Mary Annan," he whispered, "how ill you have been!"

"I shall get well now, Boyd, since you are here with me. If—if—you can forgive me—all our troubles will be over."

"Forgive you, dear!" he answered. "I have nothing to forgive. I only love you, love you, love you!"

The sound of his voice—and not even his physical weakness could quench the passion in it—was like an elixir of life to her. It even brought a faint flicker of color to her pale cheek.

"I know," she murmured, "I know. I have your letter."

From over her heart she held it forth in a trembling hand.

"Your letter written before the battle. I think I

had died when you were brought here had it not been for this."

"Mary Annan," he said, presently, "I am a United States officer. I am the enemy of your—of your government. I have done my best against your cause. I have given myself to the Union with all my heart. I stood with Admiral Farragut on the *Hartford* ready to lead the fleet into Mobile Bay, if I should be asked or needed. This is the uniform in which I was driven away. In this I have come back to you. Do you love me? Will you take me? Will you go with me in spite of all these things?"

There was a long silence in the room. The girl lying there covered her face with her hand. As for Peyton, his heart almost stopped its beating. Would she rise to this test? Was her love great enough for this sacrifice? She had repudiated him because of these things, would she take him, give herself to him in spite of them, now? He leaned forward under the impulse of his emotion and then slowly rose to his feet and stood holding the arms of the chair tremblingly, looking down at her.

"Speak to me," he whispered, "for God's sake answer!"

"I am yours, Boyd," she murmured, taking away her hand at last. "There is no North, nor South, nor East, nor West now that you are here and alive. Love is all to me. There are none of us left now but Tempe and myself. I have only you. If you will forgive me—and take me back. You kissed me once," she said, "on the porch that night. Will you——"

"Thank God! Thank God!" he whispered.

When they found him he was kneeling by the bedside, his bowed head resting upon her outstretched hand, and there was such a look of peace and rest upon the girl's face that they knew that she had indeed passed from death into life.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE MESSAGE FROM THE DEAD

AH, it was springtime once more and morning. They sat on the porch at Annandale together. Boyd Peyton had not been well enough to go North. He had been so ill so long that the war had ended leaving him still in Mobile, a quasi prisoner of war. It was the 12th of April, 1865. Richmond had fallen, Lee had surrendered, the intrenchments of the Spanish Fort at Blakely had been stormed. General Maury had retreated, and the Federal troops were entering the city. The end had come. The Confederacy was no more. God had decided that the Union could not and should not be broken. Soldiers in strange blue uniforms were filling the streets. A regiment of bronzed veterans marched up Government Street, fluttering above them the Stars and Stripes. Their band was playing—hateful tune in the people's ears—"John Brown's Body." It had been a long time since that flag had been seen in Mobile, and as Boyd Peyton had been the last to salute it then he was the first to salute it now. As the regiment marched by heading for the Shell Road, where it was expected some further resistance might be made by the Confed-

erates, a general officer, surrounded by a dusty and weather-beaten staff of hard campaigners, drew rein before Annandale House. A question to a surly passer-by elicited that this was the home of Miss Mary Annan. The general sprang from his horse, threw the reins to an orderly, and came clanking up the walk toward the house.

Boyd Peyton slowly descended the steps to meet him.

"I am General Carpenter, of the Union army," said the officer removing his hat, and staring at the other's uniform in great surprise.

"And I am Boyd Peyton, lieutenant in the United States Navy."

"What!" cried the young officer, "not Peyton of the *Hartford!*"

"Yes, sir."

"Not the officer who took the *Metacomet's* boat to the rescue of the *Tecumseh's* men?"

"Yes, sir."

"Man, I congratulate you! The country rang with your exploit, sir! By gad, it was one of the bravest deeds of the war!"

"Thank you, sir. How is Admiral Farragut?"

"What, haven't you heard? Where have you been?"

"I have been desperately ill here for over nine months."

"Of course, and we thought you dead. Well, the admiral is well. He is vice-admiral now, and will be a full admiral before Congress gets through with him."

"Good!" said Peyton, "he deserves it."

"And you? Haven't you heard about yourself?"

"I have heard nothing, General Carpenter."

"Well, it gives me great pleasure to tell you the news, sir. You have been promoted to a full captaincy in the navy on the admiral's urgent recommendation, and a medal of honor has been awarded you. Gad, the country thought you dead—they said in Congress it was giving honors to a dead man—but they'll rejoice to find you alive to claim your reward. The war is over. Richmond has fallen. General Grant has Lee corralled. Thank God, we'll all get home in a short time now. But I am looking for a Miss Mary Annan, and I am told she lives here."

"I am Mary Annan, sir," said the girl, coming to the railing of the porch and looking down upon the two. She had heard everything. The feeling in her heart now was of mingled joy that her lover's valor and courage had been so splendidly rewarded, and of sorrow for the final downfall of the South she still loved —next to him. And yet she was strangely relieved that it was all over at last.

While Boyd Peyton was by no means restored to his former health, Mary Annan was her old self once more. A little of the youth gone, some of the gayety vanished, but with the softening touches that trouble gives and with the joy that love adds, to take the place of what had disappeared. She stood quiet and composed, her hands resting upon the railing, her cheeks filled with color, her eyes ashine, looking down at the two men.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the officer, staring at her in bewilderment at her loveliness. "Forgive me, madam," he added, with the blunt frankness of a soldier, "but I have not seen anything so beautiful since I left home three years since. I have something for you, ma'am."

"This is Miss Mary Annan, General Carpenter," said Peyton. "Miss Annan, General Carpenter, of the Union army."

A year before Mary Annan would have turned from him in contempt, and indeed she did not relish his presence now, but now she belonged to Boyd Peyton. The man before her wore the same blue. She would have to recognize this fact, and she might as well begin soon as late. It was part of her sacrifice, and like every loving woman she took a strange pleasure in the pain it caused her.

"Something for me, sir?" she said. "What can it be? What is it, pray?"

"A letter, ma'am," said the officer, fumbling in his breast pocket.

"From whom, sir?"

"Madam, 'tis your own," he said, producing a crumpled envelope with dark brown stains spread over one corner of it where a round hole marked the passage of a bullet.

"My letter!" she cried, starting back.

"I took it from the hand of a dying officer," said Carpenter, softly, "at the battle of Chickamauga. He led the last assault on our troops at Snodgrass Hill. They were driven back, but it was not until he was

shot down. I ran out of our line toward him. He was lying on his face. He had this letter in his hand. He was saying something."

"What was it?" gasped the girl.

"I only caught a word or two."

"They were——?"

"'Tell Mary,' and then he said 'free,' and that was all."

"Poor fellow!" said Mary Annan, softly, clasping the letter and forgetting the others for the moment, "poor fellow, he loved me indeed!"

"What became of the body, sir?" asked Peyton, who had heard from his sister of Darrow's last charge, although he had known nothing of Mary Annan's letter.

"I buried him there on the field and marked the spot so that I could identify it."

"He shall be brought back to Mobile when the war is over if you will tell me where he lies."

"I will. You may command me at any time," returned the soldier. "I kept the letter. I only examined the date and signature in order that I might find where it was to be delivered, and I am glad to have given it back to its writer."

"You are very good," said the girl, faintly, "and I thank you for your trouble."

"No trouble at all, ma'am," said the general. "Captain Peyton, you will be wanting to go North, doubtless. There will be a transport sailing for New York to-morrow noon. I can arrange for her to take you."

"Thank you, General. I shall go on her, of course."

"Is there anything more I can do for you?"

"No, sir, nothing. Good-by."

"Good-by, sir. Good-by, madam."

"Mary Annan," said Peyton, sternly, turning toward the girl where she stood with bowed head, the letter crushed between her hands, tears streaming down her cheeks, "what was in that letter?"

He could not keep from his voice the jealousy in his heart. He did not doubt the girl's love. He could not. But what had she written to this man who also had loved her? There was agony in the suspense.

"Boyd," said the girl, "you have no right to question me in this way. You know that all my heart is yours; that my love, my life, is given to you; that I am about to abandon home, friends, country, everything, for you. Yet I can deny you nothing. Here is the letter. Take it and read it for yourself."

"No," said Peyton, touched by her words, "I will not read it. Let it be your secret and his. I trust you all in all."

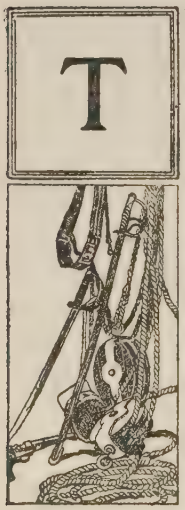
"Nay," she cried, "now you must read it. You shall, or I shall tell you of it. It was the letter in which I told him I could not marry him, and in which I begged him to release me, and I gave him the reason."

"That was——?"

"Because I knew that I loved you, and only you; that's all."

CHAPTER L

"WHITHER THOU GOEST I WILL GO"



THERE was a quiet little wedding in the parlor at Annandale the next morning. Old Dr. Bampney read the service with Willis and Pleasants, who had been taken prisoners and were permitted to come by General Carpenter, and Watson from the blockading fleet, and the general himself for witnesses; and with Pink Peyton and Tempe to attend Mary Annan. There the words were said which made them man and wife. Pink would marry Pleasants when he was released, which would be only a question of a few days. Boyd Peyton could not stay in Mobile; there was no welcome for him there, and there would not be for many a day. Mary Annan would not be parted from him again. As she had said, they were all gone whom she loved but Boyd Peyton, and he would fain take her with him as his wife. Leaving many messages for his mother with Willis and a plea for his father's forgiveness, which some day baby hands would win, the two and little Tempe went quietly away.

That night they stood on the deck of the transport fast approaching the mouth of the bay, bound to that North which appeared so cold and so unfriendly to poor Mary Annan. She had given up everything to follow him. Down below in one of the cabins Tempe was asleep. They had taken her with them to make a new home and begin a new life in what was to both of them a new land.

The night had fallen when they passed by the ruined and shattered walls of Fort Morgan. There Mary Annan had watched her little brother die. There the ships had engaged in mighty death grapple in that last Homeric contest. There her lover had been stricken down while she had watched the conflict from the grassy ramparts. The red flag with its blue St. Andrew cross and its white stars had been hauled down from that fort never to wave over it again. No longer was that flag lifted upon a staff anywhere in the land. No longer did men rally to its defence sternly resolved to die rather than let it fall to the dust, rather than disgrace should touch it. It was the flag of a cause that was lost, but for generations its defenders and their children's children would hold it in precious and tender memory, consecrated by love, hallowed by valor, made sacred by death, endeared by defeat.

It was night as the vessel slipped past the fort and headed for the open sea. Hand in hand the young husband and wife leaned over the taffrail aft and gazed back at Fort Morgan. The war was over. There was peace in the land. As they looked there came across

the dark waters the notes of a bugle playing the sweetest call and the saddest that falls upon a soldier's ear:

"Taps. Lights out. Good-night. Farewell."